

ABDUL BAHÁ'S QUESTIONED WILL
AND TESTAMENT

RUTH WHITE

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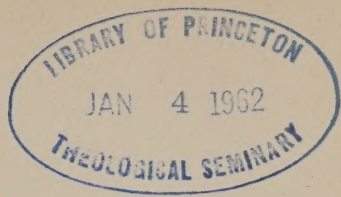
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**ABDUL BAHÁ'S QUESTIONED WILL
AND TESTAMENT**



ABDUL BAHÁ'S QUESTIONED WILL AND TESTAMENT

by
RUTH WHITE

This book contains the report of Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell, the handwriting expert for the British Museum, and editor of THE ANALYST. It is the end of an exciting trail of spiritual adventures and a sequel to my book:

BAHAI
LEADS OUT OF THE LABYRINTH

RUTH WHITE
P. O. Box 1471
Beverly Hills, California
1946

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" . . . look not upon each other with the eye of strangeness. Ye are all the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch."

"The earth is one country; and mankind is its citizens.

" . . . diversity of states is one of the peculiarities and concomitants of the human race."

Baha'o'llah.

" . . . the Religion which does not walk hand in hand with Science, is itself in the Darkness of Superstition and ignorance."

Abdul Baha.

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Foreword.

The atomic bomb was prophesied by Baha'o'llah, founder of the Bahai Religion, eighty-one years ago. At that time he also gave the remedy that would circumvent the possible destruction of our planet. This prophecy was repeated by Abdul Baha in 1912. He warned that we must speed up spiritual civilization to keep pace with scientific and material progress, otherwise materialism would destroy us.

This book deals with the conditions that have largely prevented their remedial teachings from becoming better appreciated — the mal-administration of the Bahai heritage by Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is,* who claim to derive their authority from the alleged will of Abdul Baha. In this book also is printed the analysis of that alleged will, by the great handwriting expert for the British Museum, Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell. The scientific indications are that the will of Abdul Baha is not genuine. Also, from the spiritual viewpoint, there are overwhelming indications that it is not genuine, as it contradicts the teachings of both Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha. But whether the will is genuine or spurious, the actions of the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is, and of Shoghi Effendi, stand as an

*The two ways of spelling the word "Bahai" used in this book is due to the fact that during Abdul Baha's lifetime the word was spelled "Bahai." But Shoghi Effendi insists on the word being spelled "Baha'i."

historical indictment, recorded for all time against them. Their actions show that they no more represent the Bahai Religion than the bigots of the dark ages represented Christ's teachings.

One of these actions is the trade marking of the name "Baha'i" in 1928. This is the same as if one sect within Christianity had tried to trade mark the name "Christian." In their application for the trade mark they described themselves as the: "National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of the United States and Canada, a common-law corporation, organized and operated under declaration of trust and doing business at . . ." This trade mark was later pronounced invalid by the court when the Assembly instituted two law-suits, during 1941, against two well-known Bahais, to prevent them, or anyone else, from spreading the Bahai teachings except through their organization. Of course the Assembly lost both suits and they were severely reprimanded by Judge Valente, who reminded them of the Bill of Rights, and pointed out that each one has a right to practice his religion unmolested by others.

The Assembly of Baha'is use the assets that Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha built up by preaching some of their principles from the platform. But in private, after a person has joined the Assembly, that person is faced with the alternative of complying with the narrow, bigoted edicts of Shoghi Effendi and the Assembly, or of being excommunicated.

This book is a challenge to them to prove, if they can, not only whether the will of Abdul Baha is genuine, and

the authority which they claim to derive from it is legitimate, but also whether their administration of their assumed authority is in the spirit of the teachings of Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha.

Each one reading this book should feel a personal responsibility toward this greatest peace movement of modern times. Dr. David Starr Jordan said of one of its founders:

“Abdul Baha will unite the East and the West, for he travels the Mystic Path with practical feet.”

Chapter I

Atomic power prophesied by Baha'o'llah

When I met Abdul Baha in May, 1912, while doing newspaper work in Boston, he started me on a spiritual trail that led me out of the labyrinth of materialistic philosophy into the spiritual, or intuitional consciousness. Prior to meeting him I had read much literature on Marxian Socialism and Communism and had met many of the exponents of both philosophies. As a result the poverty of the submerged classes got into the very marrow of my bones. So concentrated on negative conditions had I become that I reproduced the stigmata of poverty in my life and affairs as surely as Saint Francis, through much concentration, reproduced the stigmata of Christ's wounds upon his hands.

But my first glimpse of a photograph of Abdul Baha in a newspaper revived in me remembrances of happier days — when I had believed in the wonders and mysteries of religion. Gradually this belief had faded through much contact with the dry formalism of institutional religions, and was finally replaced by a growing belief that perhaps communism was the best solution for man's woes.

Fortunately, at my first interview with Abdul Baha he turned me face about and told me that communism and the regimentation of the human race was not the

way. The most urgent need of humanity is to attain God-consciousness — to establish spiritual civilization — that was the burden of his message everywhere he went. After release from forty years imprisonment for his faith, he traveled through Europe and America in order to arouse man from his materialism, which, he said, was driving us into universal war.

Both he and Baha'o'llah pre-visioned atomic power and both warned that in order to circumvent the possible destruction of our planet we must speed up spiritual civilization to keep pace with scientific and material progress. Eighty-one years ago Baha'o'llah said:

"A strange and wonderful instrument exists in the earth; but it is concealed from the minds and souls. It is an instrument which has the power to change the atmosphere of the whole earth, and its infection causes destruction." *

This prophecy was reiterated by Abdul Baha in an interview which he gave to the Japanese Ambassador to Spain, Viscount Arawaka, and his wife, during his sojourn in Paris — October, December, 1911, and recorded by Lady Blomfield. He said:

"Scientific discoveries have greatly increased material civilization. There is in existence a stupendous force, as yet, happily, undiscovered by man. Let us supplicate God, the Beloved, that this force be not discovered by science until Spiritual Civilization shall dominate the human mind. In the hands of men of lower material nature, this power would be able to destroy the whole earth."

He prophetically indicated that the discovery of

*Tablets of Baha'o'llah

atomic power on American soil was God-ordained. For, though he said this country is also very materialistic, yet he conceded that we are more trustworthy than any nation on earth, our form of government is better than any on earth, and that eventually it will be adopted by every country and universal peace first will be proclaimed here.

Spiritual atomics is the core of every religion that ever existed, and hints of it have been released in every age. It is the awakening of our slumbering genius, our spiritual consciousness.

The hunch of the man in the street is this spiritual consciousness in embryo; in its fulness it is the Samadhi of the yogis, the dhyana of the Buddhists, the Tao of the Chinese, the Waconda of the American Indians, the Kingdom of God of the Christ, the Resignation of Mohammed, and the "Intuitions of the Holy Spirit," of the Bahai Religion.

When a sufficient number of people awaken this consciousness, spiritual civilization will come into being.

Abdul Baha opened my eyes to the fact that the problem of paramount importance in the world today is the struggle between those who are anti-God and those who are pro-God, for in this problem all others are involved. The basic reason for this struggle is unknown to most people. In the world of politics the anti-God tendency is manifested by the dictators who stand for state regimentation and the bondage of the race, and the pro-God tendency is manifested in the democratic form of government.

Democracies are always pro-God. Or perhaps it should

be expressed the other way about. Religion always stands for the freedom of the individual and for democracy. When the principles of religion, as given by Great Teachers who appear in different eras are applied, the application increases the freedom of the individual and increases the genius of the race by developing the intuitional or super-consciousness of man.

On the other hand, the dictators, with their regimentation of individuals, are always anti-God in their tendencies, and are an evidence of loss of faith. The State takes the place of God, and through loss of faith the development of the super-consciousness is more or less retarded, thereby conducing to a moronic condition of the race.

The pro-Gods, who are vitalists and who believe that life is ruled by a beneficent Design, should become more fully aware of the definite cleavage between their ideology of democracy and that of the anti-God communists, who believe in the mechanistic conception of life, and that life is based on and governed by chance. They must become more fully aware of the priceless heritage of faith — more completely united on the most important point of every religion that ever existed — faith in God. Unless they do, they cannot circumvent the united efforts of the anti-Gods to undermine their faith. For the communists are fully aware that the quickest way to establish their form of government is to lessen faith in God.

I mention communism as the great menace, for out of it stems all other forms of totalitarianism. Within this frame of pro-Gods and anti-Gods there are many gradations of belief and unbelief. Innumerable people who think they have faith in God believe in Him only as a theory without any vital influence in their lives; they

therefore belong in the frame of the anti-Gods although they are not militantly anti. This applies to many persons inside the churches as well as to many outside. **It is this loss of faith in the reality of God as a living vital influence in one's life which is the greatest calamity that can happen to man.**

As the militantly anti-Gods are organized on a world scale to regiment the whole of mankind, therefore the lukewarm believers in God should strive to awaken to this menace. In 1919 when Abdul Baha was asked by Mr. W. H. Randall: "What will be the future of Russia?" he replied:

"The future is bad; in the future there will be great destruction. Nations should rise to extinguish this fire (of Bolshevism) so that it would not spread to other countries. Soon it will affect them. . . ." *

If I had not had the advantage, although it was through much suffering, of this alternating contact with the pro-Gods and the anti-Gods, I would also have remained asleep, as so many people are today, to the significance of this struggle. I would have remained unaware of the fact that the almost universal malady of modern man is spiritual atrophy. Baha'o'llah gave a warning of this eighty-one years ago, which was reiterated by Abdul Baha later. They both said in substance that if the race cannot be awakened spiritually, then calamities will increase until man will be driven, through untold suffering, to believe in God. We know that this has already partly taken place. Only by establishing a spiritual civilization can we avert further major calamities.

When I was a near-communist my outer condition

*The Light of the World. Page 117.

was a reflection of my inner poverty of spirit. I was unhappy, poor, unsuccessful. But when Abdul Baha revived my faith in God, life became for me a glorious adventure, enriched on all the planes. This enrichment came to me through the awakening of my intuitional nature, which enabled me to see beneath the surface of things and to act wisely in all aspects of life. This gift is open to anyone who really lives according to the principles of religion, and it always enriches us and contributes to the enrichment of the race. It is the next great step forward in spiritual, mental and moral evolution. Only by taking this step can we keep pace with the material evolution on which we have concentrated too much attention. Belief in the supernatural aspect of religion, together with the application of its principles, is the formula for attaining this super-consciousness. To ignore this belief in the supernatural is to rob religion of its vital power — the part that revives the genius of the race.

If our attitude toward scientific discoveries had been as skeptical as most people's attitude is toward the discovery of the supernatural aspect of religion, we would have been largely deprived of our modern inventions, such as radio and television. The development and discovery of the spiritual counterpart of radio and television is of infinite importance today, especially as our material development is now so far ahead of our spiritual unfoldment that it threatens our destruction.

Dr. Alexis Carrel says:

Mystical activity has been banished from most religions. Even its meaning has been forgotten. Such ignorance is probably responsible for the decadence of the churches. The strength of religion depends

Man the Unknown. Harper and Brothers.

**upon the focuses of mystical activity where its life
constantly grows . . .**

I have emphasized this mystical aspect of the Bahai Religion not only because of my first hand experience with it, but due to the fact that since Abdul Baha passed from this world in 1921, it has been excluded from the Bahai Religion by Shoghi Effendi, his grandson, together with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada. They have tried to use the Bahai Religion for the regimentation of mankind on the religious plane just as Stalin is trying to do on the political plane. Incredible though it may seem, in this supposedly progressive age, the members of the Assembly, urged on by Shoghi Effendi, carried their idea of regimentation to the extent of actually trying to violate the constitution of the United States. They instituted two lawsuits against two Bahais, Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, to restrain them from spreading the religion except through their organization. Naturally the members of the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is lost both suits. Furthermore they were severely reprimanded by Justice Louis A. Valente for attempting to break the Bill of Rights, which grants freedom to every man to practice his faith unmolested.*

The logical conclusion of such actions is that if Shoghi Effendi and the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is had succeeded in violating the Bill of Rights, and in gaining enough followers, it might have resulted in time to a recurrence of the dark ages. The offices of this organization are at Wilmette, Illinois, where stands the Baha'i Temple. Their publications are, WORLD ORDER (maga-

*See, BROKEN SILENCE by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, New History Foundation, 132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y.

zine), BAHA'I YEAR BOOK, and BAHA'I PUBLISHING COMPANY. Lectures are given under the caption BAHA'I FAITH, and other captions.

For those who are not familiar with the Bahai Cause I give this brief outline so that in reading the second part of this volume they may know why the Cause has been temporarily obscured.

The Bahai Cause had its inception in Persia on May 23rd, 1844 on which date occurred the double event of the Declaration of the Bab and the birth of Abdul Baha. These two great lights, together with Baha'o'llah, are the Founders of the Bahai Cause.

Of the fourteen important principles that Baha'o'llah gave to the world eighty-one years ago, as the ideal for man to pattern his life upon, practically none had been envisaged by mankind. Neither had the modern scientific inventions been discovered which are now forcing these principles to be adopted. In an era when such a thing as a world tribunal was not thought of, Baha'o'llah warned the world that the present day cataclysms would engulf us unless we developed spiritual civilization side by side with material civilization. He gave to the world an economic plan together with his spiritual teachings, which, if applied, would bring universal peace and happiness to mankind. At that time, about 1865, when he showed the necessity for an International Tribunal, conditions had not yet arisen which would seem to make this imperative. But now, after eighty-one years, the plans which he prophetically outlined have become a necessity, and we see a concerted attempt on the part of the United Nations to establish it. These attempts have been hastened by the

discovery of the atomic bomb, which brought to a speedy end the war with Japan.

Through this terrible instrument of destruction man is now being forced into adopting some of the principles which otherwise might have required several centuries to come into existence. In other words, what we would not heed through precept, we are now being forced into accepting through chastisement.

The fourteen most important principles that Baha'o'llah gave to the world eighty-one years ago, which were later exemplified by his son, Abdul Baha, are as follows:

1. The independent investigation of Truth. Freedom of conscience.
2. The unity and oneness of all religions.
3. The unity and oneness of mankind.
4. The unity of religion and science.
5. The unity of all countries, but each retaining its individuality. A spiritual democracy, founded on a two party system, by the votes of the people.
6. Universal education.
7. A universal auxiliary language.
8. Equal rights between man and woman.
9. Solution of the economic problem.
10. Prejudices of all kinds must be forgotten.
11. Universal Peace.
12. An International Tribunal.
13. The demonstration of Divinity and Inspiration.

14. The necessity of the confirmations of the Holy Spirit.

The last two of these principles are the most important for on them depends the ability to carry into successful action all the others. They are what Christ called "The Mysteries," and Abdul Baha called, "The Intuitions of the Holy Spirit. He said:

" . . . if a man is bereft of the intuitive breathings of the Holy Spirit, deprived of Divine Bestowals, out of touch with the heavenly world and negligent of the eternal truths, though in image and likeness he is human, in reality he is an animal; . . . " *

Therefore the ethics and morals of religion by themselves have not the magic power to transform man individually or collectively. It is this leaven of the spirit only that will accomplish that. If we combine and apply the morals and the ethics with the Intuitions of the Holy Spirit, we become the possessors of an Aladdin's Lamp. For the Power of which Aladdin's Lamp is a symbol is the Gift of religion to man; but when he forgets how to use it, it remains entombed within the religion. It needs only the magic touch of the right application of our faith to release it with benefit to ourselves and to mankind. It is our slumbering genius, which, when awakened, will catapult humanity to such heights that we of today shall appear mere pygmies in comparison.

In the following pages I shall try to show what has temporarily halted the progress of the next great step forward in spiritual evolution.

*The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. II P. 311.

Chapter II

Alleged Will of Abdul Baha discovered

The late Professor E. G. Browne of the University of Cambridge, who was the best historian of the Bahai Cause, states:

“My object in the present essay on the Babis is twofold. . . .

I wish to point out how much still remains to be done to thoroughly elucidate the matter, and to emphasize the fact that every year which passes will render it more and more difficult to fill in certain important details in the history and chronology of this sect. I sincerely hope that some, who have the means and opportunity of assisting in this task, may be induced to do so while it is still possible; . . . Believing as I do that Babism* is destined to leave a permanent mark in the world, I feel very strongly how desirable it is that this work should be accomplished. . . .”

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 1889; page 485.

It is equally important to chronicle the history of the Bahai Cause as it has come under my observation from

*“Babism” is now known as “Bahaism” or the “Bahai Cause” which derives its name from Baha’o’llah. “The Bab” means “The Gate.” He heralded the coming Messiah, Baha’o’llah.

the time that Abdul Baha passed from this world, in November 1921, up to the present writing, 1945.

The earlier chronicles of the Bahai Revelation dealt with the physical martyrdom of the Babis. This present history deals with the spiritual martyrdom which the Bahai Revelation has suffered, since Abdul Baha passed from this world. For in the hands of Shoghi Effendi, and The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, the great universal Bahai Cause has been changed into a narrow bigoted sect and many of the tactics of the dark ages have been revived. This is what has happened to the religion that many leading thinkers of the day believe is the remedy for this age.

I have already published in 1929 some history of this matter in my book, "The Bahai Religion and Its Enemy the Bahai Organization." In this book is printed the complete set of nine photographs of the alleged will of Abdul Baha written in Persian together with the English translation of it consisting of thirty-one pages.*

But since the publication of this book such appalling conditions have taken place, under the administration of Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, that I feel it necessary to write again upon this matter, and recount the calamitous results of those happenings.

Three months after Abdul Baha passed from this world, November 26th, 1921, the following cable was sent to this country to Roy C. Wilhelm of 104 Wall Street, New York City:

*Copies of this book may be purchased from the author, Mrs. Ruth White, P. O. Box 1471, Beverly Hills, Calif.

“Wilhemite, N. Y.

**In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of
the Cause and Head of House of Justice.**

(Signed) Greatest Holy Leaf, Haifa.”

The “Greatest Holy Leaf” is the sister of Abdul Baha.

The appointment of a successor came as a thunderbolt out of a clear sky to everyone. For Abdul Baha gave no hint that this was his intention. On the contrary he spoke many times against such a possibility.

A typewritten English translation of the alleged will arrived in New York four weeks later. This document, undated and un-witnessed, was read by Mr. Horace Holley to a gathering of Bahais at which I was present. No details concerning it and no comments upon it were vouchsafed. Later we heard that it had been buried in the ground, but who found it, and when, and where, has never been revealed so far as I know.

As I listened to Mr. Holley’s reading, my inner admonitor kept up a running comment: “Why had Abdul Baha appointed Shoghi Effendi as Guardian when everything he said and wrote indicated that he did not mean to appoint any successor?” And as Mr. Holley continued: “. . . a fixed money offering . . . is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God . . .,” I thought “This endows Shoghi with more potential power and wealth than a king and pope combined.”

Then Mr. Holley continued, “The Hands of the Cause of God must be ever watchful and so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the Guardian of the Cause of God, cast him out from the congregation of the people of Baha and in no wise accept any excuses from him. . . .”

Again my inner admonitor reasoned: "That is what is known in law as the "terror clause," in case a will is disputed. It will prevent those who can be easily frightened from investigating, or from even asking questions concerning the will."

After Mr. Holley had finished reading the document those present filed out of the room shocked into silence.

I kept my thoughts to myself and decided to re-read everything that both Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha had said and written, and find out if I had missed something in my previous readings which would indicate their intention of appointing an hereditary line of successors or guardians.

My husband and I had the privilege of knowing Abdul Baha for the last ten years of his life, and we spent over a hundred days in his presence, forty-nine of which were spent at his home in Haifa, Palestine, during two visits there. I had read and re-read all of his published writings as well as hundreds of unpublished Tablets and notes and I now went through the long list again. After months of research I found that neither he nor Baha'o'llah had given the slightest intimation that they intended to appoint an hereditary guardianship. In fact everything that they had said or spoken indicated the opposite intention.

I also did a great deal of recollecting of events that had happened during our two visits to the home of Abdul Baha, where I had an opportunity to see him in relation to his family and his "in-laws." The deductions that I made confirmed what Abdul Baha had so often said — that the spiritual relationship was the real kinship, and not the physical. For his family, with the exception of his

wife and sister, were the average types with a strong bent toward organized religion, whereas Abdul Baha was universal, "super-racial and undogmatic." The world was his family. His loving care for his universal family was evident throughout his life, but at no time was it more evident than during the first world war and directly after it. He personally supervised vast agricultural projects at Tiberias and Adassieh, and he rationed and distributed the products that he cultivated, thereby saving thousands from starvation. For this service and for his help in frequently bringing peace between warring factions in the Holy Land he was knighted by the British Government in April, 1920, at which ceremony we were present.

I also wish to give a few high-lights on Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of Abdul Baha, who is now his alleged successor. He had failed in his college course at the age of twenty-four, and he wished to go to Oxford University, in the autumn of 1919. Despite the objections of Abdul Baha he went. This act demonstrates that Shoghi Effendi had little consideration for the wishes of his grandfather, who was then seventy-four years of age. It also shows that he was lacking in the spiritual attributes which would have enabled him to know that it was of far more value to be with Abdul Baha, both spiritually and mentally, during the last two years of his life, than any amount of academic training could possibly be. For these last two years were filled with intense activities, and spiritual confirmations, as it was just after the first world war, and the war had made people hungry for spiritual enlightenment. As a result there flocked to the home of Abdul Baha a steady stream of pilgrims from all over the earth — the poor, the wealthy, the distinguished, and also frightened refugees. They came by

camel, train, auto, boat, and on foot to imbibe the spiritual wisdom of Abdul Baha, and each day there dined at his table about forty pilgrims. This personal contact which we were privileged to have was of tremendous importance, not only because of what he said, but because of the emanation of his spirit, which transported those who were receptive into kingdoms of enlightenment and happiness. Yet Shoghi Effendi chose to be away during the last two years of Abdul Baha's life, and did not return for a full month after he had passed from this world.

Another significant fact to which I wish to call attention is this: If Abdul Baha had had any secret intention of appointing Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Bahai Cause, it does not seem plausible that he would have excluded him from the entourage that accompanied him on his trip through Europe and America during 1912. Shoghi Effendi at that time was eighteen years of age and spoke and wrote English, Persian and Arabic; yet he was not included in this trip. Even after Abdul Baha returned to Palestine, instead of choosing Shoghi Effendi as his secretary, he chose Ahmad Sohrab, who had accompanied him to Europe and America, and who continued as his secretary for five succeeding years.

It is important for those who are interested in the Bahai Religion to free themselves from the idea that the family of Abdul Baha is a "Holy Family." In fact his family, and "in-laws," with the exception of his wife and sister, were somewhat materialistic, and viewed the religion more or less as a little family affair with a strong bent toward organization. For years they have indoctrinated, more or less, the pilgrims who visited the home of Abdul Baha, myself included, with this conception of religion. This partly nullified the great universal teach-

ings. The result was that when Abdul Baha passed from this world in November, 1921, some of his family, who had laid the ground-work for organization through these pilgrims while he was alive, hastened to establish it more firmly when he died. All this resulted in making the Bahai Movement, under the dictatorship of Shoghi Effendi, an organization which for narrowness and bigotry has no parallel in history except in the dark ages.

Remembering these things, together with my months of research, convinced me that neither Baha'o'llah nor Abdul Baha had at any time advocated an 'organization' of Bahais, far less an official organization headed by a Guardian who collected 'dues' and had the power of excommunication. Among hundreds of quotations that could be given on this subject to show that they had no intention of such an organization the following will suffice:

"The Blessed Perfection* has upturned the root of the tree of superstition and religious officers. In the past the ambitious leaders of religions have been the cause of the retrogression and ignorance of a nation. In this Cause there are no religious titles, no ceremonies of ordination. One is not respected simply because he wears a peculiar dress or carries a religious title, or has inherited it from the Fathers. No! These are not the marks of distinction. On the other hand, those sanctified souls, the signs of their divine sanctity and spirituality become apparent in the hearts of others. People are unconsciously attracted to them through their pure morality, their justice

*Baha'o'llah

Spoken by Abdul Baha at a Persian meeting and recorded by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 19, 1913.

and loving kindness. Everyone is drawn to them through their praiseworthy attributes, and pleasing qualities, and all the faces are illumined by the lights of their virtues and integrity. In this movement there is no title to be given to anyone; no See to be inherited by any person. 'The Hands of the Cause' are the Hands of Truth. Therefore, whosoever is the promoter and the servant of the Word of God he is the hand of Truth. By the 'hands of God' certain definite meanings are connoted. It is not only a verbal expression. Whosoever is more humble in the Cause of God, he is more confirmed; and whosoever is more evanescent, he is more favored."

It is inconceivable that Abdul Baha would have made this public declaration and also the following two statements if at that very time a will existed appointing a successor endowed with all the powers of a pope:

"There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not "Appointed" anyone to perform any special service, but I encourage everyone to engage in the service of the Kingdom. The foundation of this Cause is pure spiritual democracy and not a theocracy."

STAR OF THE WEST; page 116. August 20, 1917.

"In answer to a question as to whether or not there would be any clergy in the Bahai Cause, Abdul Baha said: 'No. In this movement there will never be any paid ministers, no appointed clergy, no bishops, no cardinals, no popes, no ceremonies. A clergyman, assuming that he is ordained to his ministry, may think that he knows more about God than anyone else, whereas the humble man in his congregation may know more about God than he does. The

sacerdotal and theological position makes a clergyman proud and haughty. But there is one thing in this Cause: some people may become greater than the rest, not through appointment, but through the purity of their hearts, their unselfish deeds, their heroic sacrifices, and their knowledge of God. Such illumined souls, like kind fathers or teachers, will guide and teach those less fortunate. They are the elder brothers of the members of the community. They do not arrogate to themselves any title or position. You will know them by their humility, their sincerity, their deeds, their severance, their knowledge, their spirituality, and their attraction."

Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, March 21, 1913.

"A gentleman who had spent many years in India asked by what means and what kind of organization Abdul Baha intended to spread his teachings. The answer was: 'Our organization is the love of God, the knowledge of the Almighty, the descent of the breaths of the Holy Spirit, the outflow of the spiritual life; our capital is good deeds, merciful attributes, heavenly characteristics, and divine ethics.' "

Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, December 30, 1912.

"Holding to the letter of the law is many times an indication of a desire for leadership. One who assumes to be the enforcer of the law shows an intellectual understanding of the Cause, but that spiritual guidance in him is not yet established.

The alphabet of things is for children, that they may in time use their reasoning powers. 'Following the spirit' is a guidance by and through the heart,

the prompter of the spirit. The Pharisees were extremely orthodox, holding strictly to the law. They were the cause of the condemnation and ultimate crucifixion of Jesus."

• • •

"Were not the Revelation of Baha'o'llah one adaptable to the entire world and its diverse nations, it could not be a unique and universal Revelation, but its elasticity adapts itself to all conditions, and its spirit is one that moulds itself into every vehicle and need for the accomplishment of the divine plan of unity.

But when some follow merely the hard and fixed letter of the law, they deprive it (the Revelation) of its elastic quality — the spirit — and endeavor to convert it into a hard instrument of inflexible qualities."

Star of the West, June 24, 1915; pages 43, 44, 45.

"O friends! It is the wish of Abdul Baha, that the friends may establish general unity, and not a particular meeting of unity. You must have great consideration for this fact, for during past cycles such events were, in the beginning, a means of harmony, they became in the end the cause of trouble."

Tablets Containing Instructions; 1906.

". . . It is not necessary even to label one's self. One may call one's self a Bahai and in no way live the life; on the other hand one may live the life and never be known as a Bahai. It is not so much by what name you are called, but what you are in your

heart. Are you loving and serving God? Love and service are the greatest requisites of a good life. Endeavor in every possible way to do some favor, some service for someone else; do this daily, no matter how small or trivial the act of kindness may be. Even a smile counts for much."

From Table Talks of Abdul Baha; 1906.

"If we are true Bahais, speech is not needed. Our actions will help on the world, will spread civilization, will help the progress of science, and cause the arts to develop. Without action, nothing in the material world can be accomplished, neither can words unaided advance a man in the Spiritual Kingdom. It is not through lip service only, that the Elect of God have attained to holiness, but by patient lives of active service they have brought Light into the World.

Chapter III

Bahai Religion Incorporated

From the beginning of my contact with Abdul Baha I observed a definite cleavage between the universality that he was trying to establish, and a strong tendency on the part of most of his followers toward organization, and I evaded all attempts to be drawn into it. Although I was a "recognized Bahai" I never belonged to the "Spiritual Assemblies." During my first visit to the home of Abdul Baha, in May, 1920, I decided to ask him if my stand was right. So one morning, when my husband and I were taking early morning tea with him, we found him engulfed in great floods of correspondence, and contrary to his usual custom of praising people he spoke of the dreadful lack of harmony existing among the members of the Bahai Assemblies in America, and the letters of complaint that they wrote to him one against the other.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, "Can't they understand that I have nothing to do with such pettiness?"

The thought occurred to me, "Why is he telling me this? I have never belonged to the Assemblies." I concluded that this was an opportune time to ask him if my stand in not becoming a member of them was the right one. His face beamed with happiness as he nodded approval and said:

"The organization that the Bahais have among themselves has nothing to do with the teachings of Baha'o'llah. The teachings of Baha'o'llah are universal and cannot be confined to a sect."

These same people who were the leaders in the organization then are the leaders in it today.

During the lifetime of Abdul Baha the following utterance of his was widely circulated in a blue pamphlet, 9:

"The Bahai Religion is not an organization. You can never organize the Bahai Cause. The Bahai Religion is the Spirit of this age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Bahai Cause is an inclusive movement; the teachings of all the religions and societies are found here; the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, etc., find their highest aims in this Cause. Even the Socialists and Philosophers find their theories fully developed in this Movement."

My months of research was in accordance with one of the most important points of the Bahai Religion — Independent investigation of truth, as the following by Abdul Baha will make plain:

". . . . know ye that God has created in man the power of reason whereby man is enabled to investigate reality . . . He has endowed him with mind or the faculty of reasoning by the exercise of which he is to investigate and discover the truth; and that which he finds real and true, he must accept. He must not be an imitator or blind follower of any soul. He must not rely implicitly upon the

opinion of any man without investigation; nay, each soul must seek intelligently, and independently, arriving at a real conclusion and bound only by that reality. The greatest cause of bereavement and disheartening in the world of humanity is ignorance, based upon blind imitation. It is due to this that wars and battles prevail; from this cause hatred and animosity arise continually among mankind. . . .”

“God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigations of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another’s ears nor comprehend with another’s brain. Each human creature has individual endowment, power and responsibility in the creative plan of God. Therefore depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation; otherwise you will be utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God. Turn to God; supplicate humbly at his threshold, seeking assistance and confirmation, that God may rend asunder the veils that obscure your vision. Then will your eyes be filled with illumination; face to face you will behold the reality of God and your heart become completely purified from the dross of ignorance, reflecting the glories and bounties of the kingdom.

“. . . It is the duty of everyone to investigate

reality, and investigation of reality by another will not do . . ."

The Promulgation of Universal Truth.
Discourses by Abdul Baha; pages 285-287-288.

Not until three years had elapsed after the alleged will had been read in 1922, were copies of it finally distributed, and then only to "old and recognized believers." I was among those who received a copy. But my stand continued to be one of "watchful waiting." This stand on my part caused me no embarrassment, inasmuch as I had never been a member of the Bahai organization, (Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahais). I knew that belonging to them meant conforming to the group repression and being shorn of the universal attitude which Abdul Baha said is the essence of the Bahai Cause. During these three years, however, my outer as well as my inner life was absorbed with the question of Abdul Baha's alleged will.

In May 1926 the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais incorporated the Bahai Cause, made the alleged will part of the by-laws, and proclaimed it an article of faith that Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Bahai Cause must be obeyed in all things. The alleged will had never been examined by handwriting experts.

By the powers granted in the alleged will, the Guardian collected large sums of money, and sent out various pleas for this purpose. I made four contributions during 1925 and 1926, in answer to one of these pleas which was printed on the Bahai Fund receipt and was as follows:

"It is the sacred obligation of every conscientious servant of Baha'u'llah, who desires to see His

Cause advance, to contribute freely and generously for the increase of that Fund.” — Shoghi Effendi.

One division of this BAHAI FUND was to be used in response to Shoghi's plea that more money was needed at once to buy land around the Tomb of the Bab on Mount Carmel, in order to protect this shrine from the encroachment of other people who were also buying land there. In answer to this plea I sent \$200 for the Mount Carmel division of the Bahai Fund. Later I wrote to Shoghi Effendi, and also to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais, asking how much land had been purchased, and the number and size of the lots, and where they were situated. But the only information I could get was that my contribution had been pooled with contributions of others. Who these 'others' were I could not find out. Nor was any other information given me for which I had asked.

Now I will jump ahead to 1944 and show that Shoghi Effendi and The National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is have, for the last twenty-one years, continued to disregard the question of accounting for money received. Mirza Ahmad Sohrab in his book published in 1944* writes that the Bahai Movement, under Shoghi Effendi is now an organization, and he makes the following statement:

“The movement is an organization run by an administrative body along the lines of laws and by-laws; and to be consistent with this new aspect, the financial department should be regulated according to institutionalized custom. . . . He (Shoghi Effendi) as treasurer, should see to it that

*The Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, Page 67

New History Foundation, 132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y.

a certified accountant give to the members of his community a detailed report on this fund to which they have subscribed. . . . This has not been done up to date, although twenty-one years have elapsed since the departure of the Master (Abdul Baha) . . .”

Now to return to my own experience in 1926. I knew that inasmuch as I had made contributions to the BAHAI FUND, in answer to Shoghi Effendi's plea, and could get no financial statement from him or the Assembly, that I had a legal right to demand a photographic copy of the alleged will. I therefore wrote to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is part of which letter is as follows:

“I request that you, in your official capacity as one of the officers of this organization, present to me legal evidence that your organization, in its acceptance of Shoghi Effendi as the successor of Abdul Baha, is founded on a legal claim, by presenting to me, on or before the 19th day of January, 1928, an authentic photographic copy of this document which purports to be the will of Abdul Baha.

**Yours in the service of the Cause of God,
Ruth White**

Four weeks later, on December 31, I received a reply from Mr. Holley, part of which is as follows:

**National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the
United States and Canada
Office of the Secretary
129 East Tenth Street, New York City
December 31, 1927.**

My Dear Mrs. White:

Although you have indicated several points on

which you desire explanation or comment, we feel that your letter raises only one fundamental question, namely, the validity of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha. Since this Will appoints a Guardian to administer the administrative affairs of the Cause, and since the Guardian has approved the matters you question, it of course follows that those who really desire to conform to the wishes and instructions of 'Abdu'l-Baha will accept His instructions concerning administrative affairs as soon as they know what these instructions are.

We can, therefore, give you full assurance that the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha, a copy of which was sent you over two years ago, is a document written by Him in His own hand, the validity of which has been established by a number of well-known Baha'is from different countries who inspected the original at Haifa.

Apart from this entirely convincing proof, it is a matter of interesting historical record that, when the custody of one of the Bahai'i tombs at Haifa was questioned after the departure of 'Abdu'l-Baha the final decision lay in the hands of the representative of the British Government administering Palestine under the mandate of the League of Nations, and after full investigation he restored the keys of the Tomb to the Guardian appointed in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

As no photographic copies of this document exist in this country, we are unable to meet your request for such a copy. In view of the fact that the world-wide Baha'i community naturally most con-

cerned with establishing the completeness and accuracy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's final instruction to His followers, has been satisfied with the verbal accuracy of His Will and Testament; and in view also of the fact that the highest civil authorities of Palestine have also accepted the Guardian as the administrative head of the Baha'i Cause, we know that you may rest assured that obedience to 'Abdu'l-Bahá at this time means obedience to the Guardian appointed by Him in all matters pertaining to the Baha'i Cause."

(Signed) HORACE HOLLEY, Secretary.

This answer was wholly unsatisfactory, for the very point of my letter, as well as others that I had previously sent, was that the alleged will is not in accord with the wishes or teachings which Abdul Baha expressed during his lifetime. Furthermore Mr. Holley's so-called proof of the validity of the will, that it is "a document written by him (Abdul Baha) in his own hand, the validity of which has been established by a number of well-known Baha'is from different countries who inspected the original at Haifa" would be thrown out of any court as worthless. For the "well-known Baha'is" were not handwriting experts, and no one but a handwriting expert is legally qualified to judge the validity of a questioned will. Another reason why the evidence of these "well-known Baha'is" is worthless is that they are not disinterested witnesses. They are leaders in the very organization in the by-laws of which this alleged will was incorporated. and they had made it an article of faith that this will must be accepted. Those who even questioned it were to be thrown out of the congregation of the Bahais.

As for Mr. Holley's statement: ". . . in view also of

the fact that the highest civil authorities of Palestine have also accepted the Guardian as the administrative head of the Baha'i Cause . . ." it means nothing at all as far as the vital issue is concerned. For there was no property, either personal or real, bequeathed in the alleged will and as no one contested the right of Shoghi Effendi as successor to the point of insisting upon having the alleged will put to the acid test of handwriting experts, the government's recognition of him consisted in permitting him to be the custodian of the Tombs of the Bab and of Baha'o'llah. This would have been conceded him even without a will, as he is the oldest male descendant of Abdul Baha.

As Mr. Mountford Mills was one of the "well known Baha'is" who had gone to Palestine shortly after the passing of Abdul Baha, I wrote to him asking him to give me what information he could concerning the alleged will. Mr. Mills, by the way, drew up the by-laws of the Bahai Cause, than which nothing could be more un-Bahai. Although he is an exceptionally fine man, that did not interfere with his blindness. Just after he had drawn these by-laws, my husband and I had an interview with him, in which he said that he had recently finished reading 'Christianity Past and Present' by Charles Guignebert, and that if he had read it before drafting those by-laws the history of the Bahai Cause would have been different. In other words Mr. Mills deeply regretted his action.

The following is his reply to my letter:

January 19th, 1928.

Dear Mrs. White:

I have your letter of yesterday and have also received the copies of your earlier letters to the

National Spiritual Assembly and to Mr. Holley, all bearing upon the question whether the Will accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly as Abdul' Baha's Last Testament is really so. Needless to say, I am glad to give you any information I can relating to the matter.

Answering more specifically the questions in your letter to me,

I have seen the Will.

It is written entirely in the Master's own hand.

It is signed by him.

Its parts written before the Master's seal was stolen from him in this country are sealed.

It is not dated, but its approximate date appears from its contents.

It has not been probated in the sense that we use the word, as there is no provision under the laws of Islam for such a proceeding. It has, however, been officially recognized by the British Government, the Mandatory Power now governing Palestine.

I hope these answers will satisfy the doubts that have arisen in your mind concerning the authenticity of the Will. Please let me know. I have enjoyed exceptional opportunities to learn the facts about it and do not hesitate to assure you that the document of which copies have been circulated among the Bahais in this country is the Last Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha and embodies his final and most sacred message to his followers.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) MOUNTFORD MILLS.

Then upon further questioning he wrote again as follows:

January 22nd, 1928.

Dear Mrs. White:

I have your letter of yesterday.

As I wrote in my last letter, the formal standards in executing wills here required by our laws cannot be applied to the Will of Abdu'l Baha. Viewing it through the eye of our custom so far as possible, however, we should consider its three parts as forming his main Will to which two codicils had been added, all three parts being his Last Will and Testament. This is the view I took when writing you. It also seems beyond question that this was the Master's own intention. The three parts were filed together in one place by him, with the evident intent that they should be read together as one document.

Answering your specific questions,

All three sections are signed by Abdu'l Baha.

The first two sections are sealed.

All three sections are in the handwriting of Abdu'l Baha.

The Master's seal was stolen during his visit to this country in 1912.

The first two sections were thus obviously written before 1912, the last section after his return to Palestine in 1913. A closer approximation to the exact dates can be drawn from events referred to in

the separate sections, but I have not this data with me here. As explained above, following our occidental terminology, there is but one Will with two codicils, the three parts having been written at different dates.

The commands of Abdu'l Baha which you quote concerning the identification of letters alleged to have been written by him were given out with special reference to Orientals who might come to this country and mingle with the Friends with the purpose of creating differences among them, and it has always been supposed that the commands were given with particular reference to Dr. —, who, as you know, did come here shortly afterwards. That these instructions could not have been intended to apply in full detail to all of the Master's writings is clearly shown by the innumerable Tablets sent to us that were almost never written in his own hand beyond the signature. However, I agree with you entirely that he would wish even more strongly that anyone feeling that he had reasonable grounds to doubt the authenticity of so gravely important a document as his Will should take every reasonable precaution to be sure.

Sincerely,

(Signed) MOUNTFORD MILLS.

Here again in both letters Mr. Mills' statements: "It is written entirely in the Master's own hand," and . . . "All three sections are in the handwriting of Abdul Baha" are no proof at all, as only a handwriting expert is legally qualified to judge the authenticity of the handwriting of a questioned will.

In response to other letters that I wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly, reiterating my request for photographs of the alleged will in order to have it examined by handwriting experts, I received a reply from Mr. Holley asking me to meet the members of the Spiritual Assembly. I accepted this invitation and met them on February 25, 1928. The object of the meeting on their part was, apparently, to try and make me feel that I should accept this document on verbal and circumstantial evidence. I, on my part, reiterated what I had written in my letters and tried to make them realize that to accept it in this manner was disobedience to the commands of Abdul Baha.

I asked them how they could possibly believe they were carrying out the wishes of Abdul Baha in accepting this alleged will before they had first carried out his wishes regarding the acceptance of any document alleged to be his. I reminded them that he had written:

“Any Persian . . . (who comes to America) . . . even if it is Shoghi Effendi, or Rouhi Effendi (the two grandsons of Abdul Baha) the friends must demand of him before anything else, his credential letter, written in my handwriting, or signed with my signature.”

(Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas.

From Star of the West, October 16, 1915.

They contended that this referred to a certain relative of Abdul Baha's. I maintained that it referred to anyone, and that it made no difference whether a letter or document alleged to be Abdul Baha's was brought or sent to us. He would insist that we should see his own writing or signature before we accepted it. In particular this would

apply to his alleged will, for it gave Shoghi Effendi authority totally out of keeping with Bahai principles.

The fact that Shoghi Effendi was specified in the letter of Abdul Baha just quoted, was portentous of what has happened. It was a prophetic warning foreshadowing just what has taken place.

I learned at this meeting with the Assembly that the photographs of the alleged will, which I had requested three months prior to this meeting, had not even been sent for. Therefore the next day, before the members of the Spiritual Assembly adjourned, I sent a letter to them by special delivery in which I urged that they cable to Mr. Allen McDaniel, who was then in Haifa, and request him to bring back the photographs when he returned.

In response to this letter Mr. Holly wrote that the photographs had been sent for.

Chapter IV

London — on the trail of the alleged Will

Although everyone whom I had questioned concerning the alleged will of Abdul Baha had assured me that it had never been photographed, yet about this time I heard that one set of photographs did exist and was owned by a Persian in London.

In order to insure having photostatic copies made from these in case the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais failed to secure the photographs they had sent for, or would not permit me to photograph them in case they came, I sailed with my husband for England on April 25, 1928.

I believed I could secure copies of the set through the help of a prominent Bahai in London, Mrs. Claudia Coles, because I had rendered her a great service in 1926, through foreknowledge of an event that vitally concerned her welfare. The whole story is so extraordinary that I wish I could recount it here, for it demonstrates that those who follow guidance must be willing to follow it for others also, no matter how much work is entailed and how much time and money spent. Lawrence and I had made our trip to London in 1926 solely to help her. In this particular case the Higher Powers had acted on me in the same way that a novelist acts when, as he plots his novel, he "plants" ahead of time hints of future

events. Many times I have been moved in this way to do inexplicable things, the wisdom of which only became known to me later. Happy are we if we can catch a glimpse of the plot of our lives and align ourselves with it.

The events of 1926 gave Mrs. Coles such confidence in me that now, when I suddenly appeared two years later and asked her to secure for me the photographs of the will of Abdul Baha, she gladly consented.

The very day after our arrival the photographs were in our hands and together we went to the British Museum and had them photostated. Some of the ten sheets were illegible in part, as evidently something had been spilled over the photographs from which they had been reproduced, or perhaps the plates had been over-exposed. But, needless to say, I was overjoyed at the truly miraculous way in which we had gained possession of them.

After meeting practically all the Bahais in London and many of those in Germany, we returned to America with the much-coveted document, arriving in New York on May 29th, 1928. On that very day Mr. Holley wrote to me that the photographs of the will were at his office and invited me to inspect them. But I assured him that an inspection at his office would not suffice. Three days later, on June 1st, he wrote to me again and his attitude is typical of that of all the Bahais in the organization toward the alleged will. He thought that by looking at it, and then looking at the writing, which might or might not be that of Abdul Baha, I could judge whether the writing of the will is genuine. They surely must have known that only an expert could determine this after much work with the comparative microscoper used by handwriting experts. The following is part of his letter:

My dear Mrs. White:

June 1, 1928.

At the time when the National Assembly recorded in its minutes a reference to your joint meeting with us, and our decision to request photographs or photostats of the Will and Testament, it was not contemplated that you would require more than a careful inspection of these copies of the original papers at my office. The members felt sure that by comparing the signature and handwriting with copies of original tablets which might be in your possession, you could readily satisfy yourself that the Will and Testament is absolutely genuine.

If I had not surprised him with the information that I had just returned from London with photostatic copies of the alleged will, I believe that an inspection at his office is all that would have been granted me. When I asked permission to have his set photostated as some of the sheets of those I had were partly obliterated, he said he would bring the matter up before the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

While awaiting their decision I wrote them another letter on June 26th, 1928, saying that it would greatly assist me if they would send me three or four photographs of tablets of Abdul Baha, written in his own hand, in order that these might be compared with the alleged will. Although I sent this by registered mail and the return card came back with Mr. Holley's signature, yet when he mailed the photostats to me on July 13th no mention was made of my request. This despite the fact that there were in the Bahai archives in New York, as early as 1907, five hundred tablets of Abdul Baha.*

*See Tablets of Abdul Baha, Vol. I. Introduction.

In fact the National Spiritual Assembly by refusing to have the original text of the will examined themselves and by their obvious reluctance to assist me in my efforts to have it done, appeared to be unwilling to put the alleged will to the test of handwriting analysis for fear that it might be proved invalid.

My next step was to secure the services of the greatest handwriting expert I could obtain, one whose integrity was above reproach. I finally went to Mr. Albert S. Osborne but for a number of reasons he could not undertake the task. Yet he was greatly interested, very kind, and gave me valuable advice. He said that the document should be examined from three different angles. First, from the spiritual point of view. Does the alleged will agree with the teachings and the intent that the maker held during his lifetime, or does it contradict them? Secondly, from the literary point of view. Is it written in the style of Abdul Baha? Thirdly, from the scientific point of view — submit it to the scrutiny of the best handwriting experts. As he lived in Montclair, New Jersey, Mr. Osborne kindly procured for me a photograph of the inscription written by Abdul Baha on May 12, 1912, in the Bible in the Unitarian Church in that city.

Mr. Osborne emphasized the value of having the original document of the will examined. As this was in the Holy Land he suggested that I take the matter up with the British Analyst in Palestine. But on inquiry I was told there was none there. I therefore wrote to the High Commissioner of Palestine on December 31st, 1928. I assumed that, inasmuch as the alleged will was an affair of international interest and inasmuch as it had been incorporated, without legal proof of its authenticity, in the bylaws of the National Spiritual Assembly of

Baha'is, and had thereby empowered Shoghi Effendi to collect large sums of money, the High Commissioner might undertake the examination of the document. I felt also that his verdict would carry much more weight than if I personally undertook the work, even if I had had the means to do so.

The following is the reply to my letter:

**Secretarial, Government offices, Jerusalem,
6th February, 1929.**

Madam,

I am directed to refer to your letter of the 31st December regarding the Will of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas and to inform you that any information which you wish to obtain must be obtained privately and that if you wish to take any steps to examine the Will you would be well advised to employ an advocate in Palestine.

The money order which accompanied your letter is returned herewith.

I am, Madam,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) E. Mus,

For Chief Secretary.

**Mrs. H. Lawrence White
New York City, U. S. A.**

This letter from the High Commissioner was such a disappointment that I decided to publish the result of my long and careful study of the material bearing on what Mr. Osborne called 'spiritual proof': does the alleged

will agree with or contradict the expressed intent of the alleged maker? In the autumn of 1929 I published the book to which I have already referred, "The Bahai Religion and its Enemy, the Bahai Organization." This was followed in 1930 by an appendix in which I definitely challenged the authenticity of the will.

For between the publication of this book and the appendix I sailed for England in order to engage the services of the very best handwriting expert in England, Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell. I felt he was especially qualified as he is the official expert on documents in the British Museum and the editor of *THE ANALYST*. Equally important was the fact that he is a man above reproach.

I submitted to him specimens of the handwriting of Abdul Baha together with photostat copies of the alleged will. The authentic specimens that I submitted are as follows:

1. A photographic copy of the inscription which Abdul Baha wrote in the Bible of the Unitarian Church at Montclair N. J. in 1912. This was secured for me by Albert S. Osborn and on the upper left margin of the photograph was typed: "Authentic writing of Abdul Baha written in the book of the Unitarian Church, at Montclair, N.J., U.S.A. 1912"

2. Writing from the Guest Bible for 1912, City Temple, London. This photostat copy was made by Donald Macbeth of the Manuscript Division of the British Museum.

3. Authentic signatures on two letters written to Mrs. J. Stannard and a signature on a very old letter written to Mrs. Devine.

The three photographs herewith reproduced are:
 1. Section of the alleged will of Abdul Baha. 2. Facsimile reproduction of the authentic writing of Abdul Baha written in the Bible of the Unitarian Church, Montclair, New Jersey in 1912. 3. Facsimile reproduction of the writing of Abdul Baha written in the Guest Bible of the City Temple, London, in 1912:

Two of these specimens herewith reproduced are authentic writings of Abdul Baha beyond a doubt. The one from the Guest Bible of the City Temple, London, agrees with the writing in the Bible of the Unitarian Church at Montclair, New Jersey. Three men witnessed Abdul Baha write with his own hand the inscription in the Bible of the City Temple. They are: John Kelman, Oliver Lodge, and Edwin Brough. Donald Macbeth, of the manuscript department of the British Museum, who photographed it, signed on the back of the photograph to that effect. The following is the translation of this inscription that Abdul Baha wrote in the Bible of the City Temple, in 1913:

This book is the Holy Book of God, Celestial Inspiration; it is the Bible of Salvation, the noble Gospel. It is the mystery of the Kingdom and its Lights. It is the Divine Bounty, the sign of the Guidance of God.

(Signed) 'Abdul Baha' 'Abbas

This English translation appears side by side with the Persian writing of Abdul Baha.

The following is a translation of the inscription that Abdul Baha wrote in the Bible of the Unitarian Church at Montclair, New Jersey, May 12, 1912, on which occasion he spoke at that church:

“O Almighty! O Pure God! Thanks be unto Thee that the mountain and desert were traversed, the all surrounding ocean was crossed until we arrived on this continent and now in this country have we loosed our tongue in Thy name and Mention, and in this church like unto Elias have we heralded Thy Kingdom.

O God! Attract the members of this church to Thy Beauty, protect and guard them under Thy Shelter and bless them!

(Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas.

The third specimen of handwriting reproduced here is from the alleged will of Abdul Baha. A comparison of this enlarged writing with the enlarged writing of the two authentic writings of Abdul Baha makes differences perfectly apparent that would not be so apparent without enlargement.

There can be no doubt about the authenticity of this signature to Mrs. Devine's letter, or of the two signatures in letters to Mrs. Stannard. Dr. Mitchell said that these two undoubted specimens of Abdul Baha's writing and the specimen from the Unitarian Church in Montclair, and also that from the City Temple in London, all agree together as the writing of the same person.

After months of analytical work on the handwriting of the alleged will, comparing it with the three undoubted specimens of Abdul Baha's writing, Dr. Mitchell says that the writing in the alleged will is not all in the same hand. Furthermore none of it is in the same handwriting as the specimens submitted. The following chapter is devoted to Dr. Mitchell's report.

Chapter V

Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell's Report

C. Ainsworth Mitchell, D.Sc., F.I.C.

Tel Victoria 8363.

85, Eccleston Square
London, S.W.1.

June 3rd 1930

R E P O R T

ON THE WRITING SHOWN ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ALLEGED WILL OF ABDUL BAHA.

I have made a minute examination of the writing in the photographs and photographic enlargements of the alleged will of Abdul Baha, and have compared it with the authenticated writing of Abdul Baha in a series of photographs and photographic enlargements received from Mrs. H. Lawrence White.

In the absence of an opportunity to examine the original document, any conclusions to be drawn from an examination of the photographic enlargements must necessarily be of a provisional character contingent upon the accuracy of the photographic records. Moreover, some of the facts which are taken into consideration in

the scientific examination of an original document cannot be perfectly studied in a photographic reproduction, such as, for example, the ink, paper, penstrokes, and so on.

Assuming that the authenticated specimens of writing are of approximately the same period as that at which the disputed will is alleged to have been written and signed, the points which can be accurately compared in the photographic enlargements are the mode of formation of the writing, the changes in pressure, the form of individual letters, and the relationship in the size of parts of the letter to the whole.

A fact requiring explanation is the presence of apparent erasures on some of the pages of the will, namely in lines 12 and 13 of page 2, and line 13 of page 4. Without a microscopical examination of the original document it is not possible to state whether a chemical agent has been used, but assuming there have been erasures at these points I think it probable that they were done mechanically, not chemically. The apparent erasure on page 5, line 11, may possibly be the result of an imprint from other written matter while the ink was wet.

The photographic reproductions of authenticated specimens of the writing of Abdul Baha were the following:—

1. Writing from the Book of the Unitarian Church, Montclair, New Jersey.
2. Writing from the Guest Bible for 1912, City Temple, London.
3. Authenticated signatures on two letters to Mrs.

امیر بیدمقدس است بزرگوار است نورانی است
انجیر صدر است اسرار ملکوت است خلد لا هو است
حضرت الهی است انوار است نور است
معدن است

Stannard on a photograph, and a possibly authentic signature in the possession of Mrs. Devine.

There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the signature from Mrs. Devine, since it agrees closely with the other signatures.

The Signatures on the Envelope: — A comparison of the four signatures on the envelope of the alleged will with the four authenticated signatures reveals many striking differences in the mode of formation of the characters, as for example:

In the authentic signatures the width of these characters, compared with their height, is much greater than in the signatures on the envelope. The strokes are also much firmer in the envelope signatures than in the authenticated signatures.

In the authenticated signature, the entire character is roughly $2\frac{1}{4}$ times the width of the open space between the uprights; in the disputed signatures the corresponding figure is twice as great. In the authentic signatures the cusp is rounded; in the disputed signatures it is pointed. In the authenticated signatures the relationship between the depth of the gap and its breadth is as 1 : 1.4 to 1.6, whereas in the disputed signatures it is as 1 : 2.3 to 2.6. Thus the ratio is totally different. In my opinion these differences are not consistent with the signatures upon the envelope being in the writing of the writer of the authenticated signature.

The Body of the Will: — A comparison of the formation of the writing on the envelope with that on pages 9 and 10 of the will shows so many points of resemblance

that there is no reason to doubt that they were written by the same person.

I have also studied minutely the photographic enlargements of the writing on the other pages of the will, and have formed the following conclusions:—

Page 2, with the exception of the last two lines, agrees with Page 3.

The last two lines of Page 2 agree with Page 4.

The other pages, namely 5, 6, 7 and 8, agree in the characteristics of writing with the writing on Page 4. That is to say, the writing does not agree with the hypothesis that it was all written by one person.

The writing of Abdul Baha has certain distinctive features, among which are a sudden change of pressure in some of the strokes, wavering formation of some of the curves, and the formation of sharp angles in some of the characters. These characteristics are sharply indicated in the enlarged photographs of the writing in the City Temple, London, and in the Montclair writing.

A minute comparison of the authenticated writing with the writing on every page of the alleged will, and in particular with the lines 10, 11 and 12 on page 5, has failed to detect in any part of the will the characteristics of the writing of Abdul Baha, as shown in the authenticated specimens.

In addition to these differences in writing habits, there are also differences in the shapes of many of the parallel characters in the body of the document com-

pared with the authenticated writing, as in the case of the signatures mentioned above.

(Signed) C. AINSWORTH MITCHELL.*

Dr. Mitchell not only spent months examining the enlarged specimens submitted to him, but he examined minutely every line of the ten photographs of the alleged will, and his conclusion is that it is not written throughout by the same person. This fact, in addition to others, indicates that the will is spurious, especially if we bear in mind that Shoghi Effendi, and the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is, assert that every word of it is written in the hand of Abdul Baha. Also if we bear in mind that it is undated, and unwitnessed, and that it contradicts the teachings that both Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha gave during their lifetimes — that the Bahai Cause is a spiritual democracy and not a theocracy. The appointment of an hereditary guardianship contradicts this.

Dr. Mitchell's report also shows that none of the handwriting of the alleged will is the same as the authentic specimens of Abdul Baha's handwriting that were submitted to him.

The ratio between the depth of the gap and its breadth, Dr. Mitchell shows, is totally different between the authentic signatures and those in the alleged will. It is as 1:1.4 to 1.6 in the authentic signatures, whereas in the disputed signatures it is as 1:2.3 to 2.6.

Most persons are unaware of the fact that handwriting experts use modern inventions that measure the slants, the spaces, and the tremors of writing so accurately that it makes the difference between two speci-

*A photostat copy of Dr. Mitchell's report is in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

mens of different writing overwhelmingly apparent, when these are enlarged, even though one of the specimens may be so clever a forgery of the other as to appear identical to the naked eye.

Those Bahais who assert that they are familiar with the handwriting of Abdul Baha, and have compared it with the writing of the will, and have found them identical, reveal the fact that they are either totally unaware of the science used by the best handwriting experts, or else fear has prompted them to assert their belief in the authenticity of the will — fear of being excommunicated if they so much as question the document. This science that the best handwriting experts use is so mathematically accurate that any number of experts using these modern inventions will arrive at the same results.

I have already referred to the extreme care that Abdul Baha showed in regard to letters purporting to be from him, sent or brought to this country. The following instance shows that he was even more careful to make certain that any Tablet or document of his relating to important public matters was properly translated and authenticated before it was sent out. He wrote a Tablet to the Secretary of the Court for Durable Peace, at the Hague, on December 17, 1919, and he considered it necessary to have four men translate it. These four men were Shoghi Effendi (Rabanni), Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Mirza Lotfullah Hakim, and Dr. J. E. Esselmont. This Tablet was signed Abdul Baha Abbas, and was published in the *Star of the West* (Bahai Magazine), August 1, 1920, with the four names of the translators and witnesses.

The quadruple witnessing of this Tablet, written two

years before Abdul Baha passed from this world, makes it evident that he did not consider Shoghi Effendi careful enough, or efficient enough, to translate the Tablet to the Court for Durable Peace without the help of three other men. Is it likely, then, that at this very time an authentic will of Abdul Baha's, of infinitely greater importance than this Tablet to the Hague, should lay hidden in the earth, undated and unwitnessed, in which this same Shoghi Effendi was appointed sole guardian of the Bahai Cause, with more potential power and wealth than a king and pope combined? And that later this same will was translated by one person only, the beneficiary himself — Shoghi Effendi. Is this in accordance with Abdul Baha's super-carefulness?

Chapter VI

Spiritual indications that the will is spurious.

I have tried to show that the authenticity of the alleged will does not stand the test of handwriting analysis; that its contents contradict the often expressed intent of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha for Bahais; and that its undated, unwitnessed condition is in direct contradiction to Abdul Baha's habits of extreme, meticulous care in regard to everything which he wrote.

I wish now to trace the devastating effect of this alleged will upon the organization which accepted it blindly, and to show by contrast the splendid work which has been done by Bahais who have acted freely and in accordance with true Bahai teachings.

Abdul Baha said that if an angel from heaven comes down and tries to change the teachings of Baha'o'llah, do not believe him. Shoghi Effendi has changed them by pronouncements and actions which are in direct contradiction to Bahai teachings — above all he has changed the very character and fundamental principle of the Cause by putting a theocracy, which the founders said it was **not**, in place of the spiritual democracy which they said, over and over again, it is. The following instances show what acceptance of the alleged will has done to the blind followers of its rules.

Mr. Horace Holley, as spokesman for Shoghi Effendi, made this statement in 1925:

“The individual conscience must be subordinated to the decisions of the elected Spiritual Assembly.”*

This statement strikes at the very foundation of the Bahai Cause, as one of its cardinal teachings is that man must have freedom of conscience. Among dozens of instances that could be given of Abdul Baha's statements on this subject is the following:

“ . . . the conscience of man is sacred and to be respected; and that liberty thereof produces widening of ideas, amendment of morals, improvement of conduct, disclosure of the secrets of creation, and manifestation of the hidden verities of the contingent world. . . . So in the world of existence two persons unanimous in all grades (of thought) and all beliefs cannot be found. ‘The ways unto God are as the number of the breaths of (His) creatures,’ is a mysterious truth. . . . ”*

Again, about twenty years later, Abdul Baha said:

“ . . . Just as in the world of politics there is need for free thought, likewise in the world of religion there should be the right of unrestricted individual belief. Consider what a vast difference exists between modern democracy and the old forms of despotism. Under an autocratic government the opinions of men are not free, and the development is stifled, whereas in democracy, because thought

*Bahai Year Book, Vol. I P. 55

*The Traveller's Narrative. Translated by Prof. Edward G. Browne.

and speech are not restricted, the greatest progress is witnessed. It is likewise true in the world of religion. When freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and right of speech prevail, that is to say, when every man according to his own idealization may give expression to his beliefs, development and growth are inevitable.” *

We can see from the foregoing that Abdul Baha emphasized the necessity of man's being able to exercise freedom of conscience, as Baha'o'llah did.

The reason Mr. Holley, as spokesman for Shoghi Effendi, made this incredible statement that “. . . the individual conscience must be subordinated to the Spiritual Assembly, . . .” is that since Abdul Baha passed from this world the Bahai teachings have been garbled in such a way as to lead people to suppose that when Baha'o'llah said that mankind must obey its governments he meant the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is!

In order to realize how this inversion could have taken place we must understand that Baha'o'llah gave to the world, as one of the cardinal points of his teachings, the necessity for a Supreme Tribunal, composed of the wisest men in each nation, and he used such expressions as “Assembly” and “National Assembly,” in speaking of these anticipated Parliaments of the world. This title, “National Assembly,” was adopted by the Bahai's when they began their activities in America over forty years ago. Whether the leaders of that time did this with the intention of making the writings of Baha'o'llah appear as if they referred to the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is whenever he spoke of the National Assemblies,

*The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. I, Page 192.

or Parliaments of the world, I do not know. But I do know that Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'ís are forcing this interpretation upon the Bahá'í world today.

The only valid subordination of the individual conscience is, according to the teachings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha, in civil matters, as for instance in the election of Mr. Roosevelt for president. He won by majority vote, therefore those who had voted for Thomas Dewey had to subordinate their individual conscience, that is their preference, to the wishes of the majority.

During the lifetime of Abdul Baha the attempts of the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'ís to organize the Bahá'í Religion were held in abeyance, but after he passed from this world, under the dictates of Shoghi Effendi, they swung it into an organization the like of which has not been seen since the dark ages. They tried to exercise the power over the Bahá'í world that Baha 'o'llah said would be vested in the SUPREME TRIBUNAL of the future world governments. In order to enforce this power they excommunicated those who would not accept their pronouncements, and twice the members of the National Assembly sued at law in order to try and prevent other Bahá'ís from promulgating the religion which they held in common; but, fortunately, they lost both these suits. Judge Valente, reprimanding them, reminded them of the Bill of Rights, which grants freedom to every man to practice his religion unmolested. All of this the reader can learn in the ensuing pages.

The Tablet that Abdul Baha wrote to the Court for Durable Peace at The Hague, referred to in the preceding pages, is one among many instances that could be cited

confirming what has here been stated — that when Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha speak of "Assembly," and "National Assemblies" in relation to world governments, they do not mean the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is. Part of this Tablet of Abdul Baha's follows:

To the Central Organization for Durable Peace

Office of Secretary:

19 Prinsesegracht

The Hague, Holland

Executive Committee

**"O ye esteemed ones who are the pioneers
among the well-wishers of the world of humantiy!**

. . .

**"There is not one soul whose conscience does
not testify that in this day there is no more impor-
tant matter in the world than that of Universal
Peace. . . .**

**". . . the teachings of His Holiness Baha'o'llah
were not limited to the establishment of Universal
Peace . . .**

**". . . Among these teachings was the inde-
pendent investigation of reality . . .**

". . . the oneness of the world of humanity . .

**". . . religion must be the cause of fellowship
and love . . .**

**". . . religion must be in conformity with
science and reason. . . .**

**". . . religious, racial, political, economic and
patriotic prejudices destroy the edifice of human-
ity. . . .**

. . .

"Regarding the economic prejudice, it is apparent that whenever the ties between nations become strengthened and the exchange of commodities accelerated, and any economic principle is established in one country, it will ultimately affect the other countries and universal benefits will result. . .

"As to political prejudice, the policy of God must be followed and it is indisputable that the policy of God is greater than human policy. We must follow the Divine policy and that applies to all individuals. He treats all individuals alike: no distinction is made, and that is the foundation of the Divine Religions.

"And among the teachings of His Holiness Baha'o'llah is the origination of one language that may be spread universally among the people . . . in order that this universal language may eliminate misunderstandings from among mankind.

". . . the unity of women and men. The world of humanity has two wings — one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. . . .

". . . voluntary sharing of one's property with others among mankind. This voluntary sharing is greater than equality, . . . But this should not be introduced by coercion so that it becomes a law and man is compelled to follow it. Nay, rather, man should voluntarily and of his own choice sacrifice his property and life for others, and spend willingly for the poor, . . ."

"And among the teachings of His Holiness Baha

'o'llah is man's freedom, and through the ideal Power he should be free and emancipated from the captivity of the world of nature; . . .

"And among the teachings of Baha'o'llah is that religion is a mighty bulwark. If the edifice of religion shakes and totters, commotion and chaos will ensue and the order of things will be utterly upset, for in the world of mankind there are two safeguards that protect man from wrong doing. One is the law which punishes the criminal; but the law prevents only the manifest crime and not the concealed sin; whereas the ideal safeguard, namely, the religion of God, prevents both the manifest and the concealed crime, trains man, educates morals, compels the adoption of virtues and is the all inclusive power which guarantees the felicity of the world of mankind. But by religion is meant . . . the foundation of Divine Religions and not human imitations.

"And among the teachings of Baha'o'llah is that although material civilization is one of the means for the progress of the world of mankind, yet until it becomes combined with Divine civilization the desired result, which is the felicity of mankind will not be attained. . . . Divine civilization is the lamp itself and the glass without the light is dark. Material civilization is like the body. No matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead. Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit, otherwise it becomes a corpse. It has thus been made evident that the world of mankind is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit. . . .

. . . .

"In fine such teachings are numerous. These manifold principles, which constitute the greatest basis for the felicity of mankind and are of the bounties of the Merciful, must be added to the matter of Universal Peace and combined with it, so that results may accrue. Otherwise the realization of Universal Peace (by itself) in the world of mankind is difficult. As the teachings of His Holiness Baha 'o'llah are combined with Universal Peace, they are like a table provided with every kind of fresh and delicious food. Every soul can find, at that table of Infinite bounty, that which he desires. If the question is restricted to Universal Peace alone, the remarkable results which are expected and desired will not be attained. The scope of Universal Peace must be such that all the communities and religions may find their highest wish realized in it. At present the teachings of His Holiness Baha'o'llah are such that all the communities of the world, whether religious, political or ethical, ancient or modern, find in the teachings of Baha'o'llah the expression of their highest wish.

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"For example, the question of Universal Peace, about which His Holiness Baha'o'llah says that the SUPREME TRIBUNAL must be established; although the LEAGUE OF NATIONS has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing Universal Peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which His Holiness has described will fulfil this sacred task with the utmost might and power. And his plan is this: that the national assemblies of each country and nation — that is to say parliaments —

should elect two or three persons who are the choicest men of that nation, and are well-informed concerning international laws and the relations between governments and aware of the essential needs of the world of humanity in this day. The number of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly, that is, the parliament, must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the cabinet and also by the president or monarch so that these persons may be the elected ones of all the nation and the government. From among these people the members of the Supreme Tribunal will be elected, and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for everyone of these delegates is fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any international question, either unanimously or by majority-rule, there will no longer be any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objections for the defendant. In case any of the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this SUPREME TRIBUNAL. Consider what a firm foundation this is! But by a limited and restricted LEAGUE the purpose will not be realized as it ought and should. This is the truth about the situation, which has been stated."

. . . .

(Signed) Abdul-Baha Abbas

Haifa, Palestine, December 17, 1919

Published in STAR of the WEST August 1, 1920

Translated by: Shoghi Rabbani (Effendi)

Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi
Mirza Lotfullah Hakim,
Dr. J. E. Esslemont.

The reader will note that whenever Abdul Baha speaks of "National Assemblies," he always adds "The Parliaments of the world."

This Tablet, a résumé of some of Baha'o'llah's teachings, deals chiefly with the necessity of establishing a SUPREME TRIBUNAL. The United Nations Organization is an embryonic SUPREME TRIBUNAL such as he envisioned eighty years ago, and even though the results of this first attempt may still be far from successful, yet the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy is a harbinger of better things to come.

When Baha'o'llah spoke of the necessity for the establishment of the SUPREME TRIBUNAL, he released with those words the leaven of the Spirit to all mankind. Those who were receptive, including people who may never have heard of Baha'o'llah, became animated by this leaven to carry parts of the Bahai Teachings into action. And this leaven has been working ever since. For eighty years it has worked in many ways — worked through constructive means, such as inspiring those with scientific talents to discover great inventions — airplanes, radio and many others — which united the world physically in preparation for its spiritual unification. This leaven worked even through destructive forces such as the great chastisement of the two world wars. During and after this last world war we have heard it said frequently that "there are no atheists in the fox holes."

Abdul Baha's method of conveying the Bahai Message was largely by way of tests. He gave the universal teachings in three ways — by speech, by deeds, and as Baha'o'llah did, by the leaven of the Spirit. He rarely said, "Do not do this or that." He never interfered with anybody's conception of religion. If one could not learn by precept, and example, and the awakening of the Inner Light, one had to learn by the more difficult way of tests and chastisements. The spiritual law of tests is one of the cardinal points of every religion that ever existed; it is Christ's spiritual law of Cause and Effect — "As a man sows so shall he reap." It is one aspect of the Buddhist and Hindu Law of Karma. It applies to all of us whether we believe in it or not, and regardless of what religion we belong to, or even if we belong to none at all. The following, by Abdul Baha, on "Tests" embodies this fundamental law of all religions:

In this day everyone must be tested, as the time of the Chosen Ones to prove their worth is indeed very short. The Day of Attainment is drawing to a close for them. The First Fruits must be ripened in Spirit, mellowed in Love, and consumed by their self-sacrifice and severance. None other are acceptable as First Fruits and all that fail to attain to the standard through the tests are relegated to the many who are called.

The more one is severed from the world, from desires, from human affairs and conditions, the more impervious does one become to the tests of God. Tests are a means by which a soul is measured as to its fitness and proven out by its own acts. God knows its fitness beforehand and also its unpreparedness, but man, with an ego, would not believe

himself unfit unless proof were given him. Consequently his susceptibility to evil is proven to him when he falls into the tests and the tests are continued until the soul realizes its own unfitness, then remorse and regret tend to root out the weakness.

The same test comes again in a greater degree, until it is shown that a former weakness has become a strength and the power to overcome evil has been established.

. . .

The worst enemies of the Cause are in the Cause and mention the Name of God. We need not fear the enemies on the outside for such can be easily dealt with. But the enemies who call themselves Friends and who persistently violate every fundamental law of Love and Unity are difficult to deal with in this Day. . . .

This last paragraph applies overwhelmingly to the activities of Shoghi Effendi, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is. They have violated the principles of brotherhood and unity because of their inversions of the Bahai teachings. These inversions are all the more tragic at this particular time when the world has been made receptive, through much suffering, to the great universal principles of the Bahai Religion. Two prophecies of Baha'o'llah have been so accurately fulfilled — the discovery of Atomic Power, and the embryonic Supreme Tribunal as manifested in the United Nations Organization that we would do well to consider the third — the

*In an interview given to Dt. Getsinger.

Part of this is published in Divine Art of Living.

possible destruction of our planet unless we circumvent this threatened fate by a balanced spiritual civilization.

The following prophecy of Abdul Baha, recorded by Charles Mason Remey in answer to some questions that he asked in 1911, may also be an indirect allusion to atomic power:

What is the significance of the prophecy, 'Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days (1335)?' Daniel 12:12.

A. After that date a great disturbance — a terrible (material) calamity is to happen in the world.

Q. Is it to be in the form of war and strife, or will it be as an earthquake, such as has happened in Messina and elsewhere?

A. Wars and earthquakes, such as you have mentioned, will happen, but these, compared with this great catastrophe to come, will be as nothing. As in the past whole peoples and civilizations have, through physical changes, been obliterated, so that not a trace has remained, so it will be when this great change shall take place.

Q. In the Bible there is a prophecy: "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein" (Zechariah 13:8-9.) Does this refer to the happening in question?

A. Yes.

Q. Will this take place soon after the date 1917 (which is the date mentioned, 1335 days) or 1335

A.H. (after Mohammed), or 1917 A.D., or will it happen in the very distant future?

A. It is not so very soon after nor again is it in the so very distant future.

At a later date Abdul Baha explained that these 1335 days mean 1335 solar years, from the flight of Mohammed from Medina to Mecca, which is the beginning of the Mohammedan era 622. This date added to 1335 is 1957.

Strangely enough, as I finish this book in February, 1946, a radio commentator flashes the news that a nation wide poll representing a cross section of the United States, revealed the fact that millions of people believe that within the next ten or fifteen years Russia and the United States will be at war. If this happens we know it will be an atomic war. We also know that the prophecy in the Bible, “. . . two parts therein shall be cut off and die but the third shall be left therein,” might then become a reality. Ten or fifteen years from now would bring the date for this cataclysm within the specified time of both this Biblical prophecy and the foregoing prophecy of Abdul Baha. However, both Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha show that we can circumvent threatened cataclysms through faith in God and prayer, combined with the practice of the principles of religion. In other words, we can deflect any destructive forces leveled at us if enough people will revivify their faith in God and prayer. Baha'o'llah says on this subject:

“The decrees of God as related to fate and predestination are of two kinds. Both are to be obeyed and accepted. The one is irrevocable, the other is, as termed by men, impending. To the former all

must unreservedly submit, inasmuch as it is fixed and settled. . . .

The decree that is impending, however, is such that prayer and entreaty can succeed in averting it."

This matter of freedom of conscience is the most important part of the Bahai Teachings. God has given man free-will, and no earthly priestcraft nor dictatorship must interfere with man's using that free-will in matters of faith and the inner relationship between the soul and God. This is the meaning of the spiritual democracy of which Abdul Baha so often speaks — religion percolating through all the affairs of our daily life, and an ideal political government coming into existence as the result of the change of man's nature and belief.

Many great evils are caused by leaders who have tried to control the conscience of man. We have seen this in our day in Russia, where the first canon of communism is atheism. Over the Kremlin is written: "Religion is the opiate of the people." In Nazi Germany political dictators said: "You must believe in no form of government but mine." A religious dictator says in substance: "You must not believe in any conception of God except what I tell you to believe."

This is just the twist that the present leaders of the Bahai organization have tried to give to the Universal Message of Baha'o'llah.

There are many other wholly un-Bahai edicts that Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais have issued beside these two that follow:

" . . . the individual conscience must be subor-

**minated to the decisions of the Spiritual Assembly,
 . . . and:**

“ . . . individual Bahai effort without due consultation is foredoomed to failure.”

Other un-Bahai edicts that are given from time to time in the secret paper BAHAI NEWS, and circulated by the National Spiritual Assembly among its members are:*

1. “Recognized Bahais of the United States and Canada must not take part in any local, provincial or national election, conducted by political parties, where votes are to be cast for one or two or more candidates.” (This forbids voting for our presidents or voting in other government matters.)

2. “Recognized Bahais must not run for any public office as candidates of any political party, nor take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion of any party or party platform.

3. “Recognized Bahais must not vote in any election based upon a party system.”

4. “Recognized Bahais must abstain from association with movements advocating social changes that presume partisan political action.

5. “Recognized Bahais who speak on Bahai platforms must abstain from making any critical statements about any particular government or national policy.”

6. “Every Local Bahai Center must be respon-

*See BROKEN SILENCE, Pages 155-6, by Ahmad Sohrab, New History Foundation, 132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y.

sible for the carrying out of the above laws by the Bahais in their respective communities. Local membership must include only the names of those who faithfully obey these regulations."

7. "Recognized Bahais must not retain or apply for membership in any church or religious group."

8. "Bahais failing to give unreserved obedience to the above regulations and to numerous others which are constantly legislated, and month after month spread on the pages of the BAHAI NEWS by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, are expelled or excommunicated from the Cause, and the Bahais are not permitted to associate with these expelled or excommunicated ones, regardless of friendship, no matter of how long standing, nor of the depth of their affection or love."

Everyone of these edicts are inversions of the Bahai Teachings, as given to the world by the Founders of the Cause.

In saying that recognized Bahais must not vote in any election based on a party system Shoghi Effendi and his hierarchy have set up what might be considered a government within each government in every country where there are enough of his followers. Over that government he is supreme dictator. His subjects must pay taxes to him (tithes) and he forbids his followers to vote on national and civic affairs. All his edicts no matter how un-patriotic, or how much in violation of the universal principles of the Bahai Religion, must be obeyed under threat of excommunication.

This revival of excommunication is a horrible inversion of the Bahai teachings — the Revelation for which Baha'o'llah suffered imprisonment for twenty-five years, and Abdul Baha for forty years — the Cause for which twenty thousand martyrs sacrificed their lives to establish freedom of conscience and to unite all mankind regardless of religion, race or country. The idea of excommunication is impossible in the world envisaged by Baha'o'llah.

For those who would like a list of books written by the Founders of the Bahai Religion, Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha, I refer them to the following:

Hidden Words by Baha'o'llah

Seven Valleys " " "

Book of Iqan " " "

Tablets " " "

Some Answered Questions by Abdul Baha

Mysterious Forces of Civilization by Abdul Baha

Promulgation of Universal Peace by Abdul Baha
(Vol. I., II., III.)

Tablets of Abdul Baha (Vol. I., II., III.)

Talks by Abdul Baha, in London

Talks by Abdul Baha, in Paris

Divine Wisdom of Abdul Baha.

Chapter VII

The Lawsuit of the National Spiritual Assembly

The most shocking act of the Bahai organization considered from the point of view of the intentions of the Founders of the Cause, was the legal prosecution brought by the organization against certain well known Bahais who were trying to spread the teachings in the universal spirit in which they had been first given to the world. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab founded the New History Society in New York in 1929, and The Caravan a year later, with the sincere desire of spreading the Bahai teachings and spirit. They were so successful that Shoghi Effendi 'excommunicated' them, and later, with his sanction, the National Spiritual Assembly brought suit against them in 1941. I quote in full the statement made against them by the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais:

Statement made by plaintiffs:

1. The individual plaintiffs sue, as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. The Spiritual Assembly of Bahais of the City of New York, a religious corporation, is a co-plaintiff.

The complaint alleges that the name Baha'i de-

notes a religion identified with the name of the founder BAHÁ.

2. The plaintiffs claim to be the authorized representatives of all the Bahais of the United States and Canada.

3. They allege that they are publishing books and other publications which teach Bahai Religion.

4. They charge that the defendants, who were members prior to April 5, 1929, of the Bahai Congregation of the City of New York, have been conducting, without the authority of plaintiffs, meetings, lectures, classes, social gatherings and other activities, and announcing and advertising the same as Bahai meetings, lectures, classes, etc.

5. They complain that the defendants have been giving these meetings, lectures, etc., a Bahai appearance and atmosphere by teaching, in connection therewith, a religion described as the Bahai Religion and that they have created an erroneous impression that they are connected with and authorized to represent the Bahai religion and to solicit contributions therefor.

6. In addition plaintiffs complain of the opening of a book shop by the defendants under the name of "Bahai Book Shop" and of the listing of the shop in the telephone directory under the name, immediately over the name of Baha'i Center" which represents the listing of plaintiffs' New York office and book shop.

The following is the decision rendered by Supreme

Court Justice Louis A. Valente in favor of Mrs. Chanler and Mirza Sohrab:

1. In the Court's opinion, the complaint fails to state a good cause of action. The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion.

2. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures, classes and other activities.

3. No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings, lectures or book shop are identified with or affiliated with the meetings, lectures, etc., and book shop of the plaintiffs.

4. (a) Defendants have the absolute right to practice Bahaism,

(b) to conduct meetings,

(c) to collect funds,

(d) to sell literature in connection therewith, and

(e) to conduct a book shop under the title of "Bahai Book Shop."

Evidently the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is were unable to see that in bringing this lawsuit, they were not only utterly un-Bahai but also they were asking for something that could not be granted without violating the constitution of the United States. For the Bill of Rights grants freedom of conscience and

the right of each citizen to practice his religion without interference.

The Assembly appealed to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court three months later to have the decision of the Supreme Court Justice Louis A. Valente set aside. But again the National Spiritual Assembly lost, and they were put on record for all time as not only trying to violate the constitution of the United States, but also of violating one of the most important teachings of the Bahai religion, which they purport to represent — freedom of conscience and the right of every man to practice his religion without interference.

These two lawsuits had the same significance to Bahais as if the followers of one Christian sect had sued the followers of another sect to prohibit them from calling themselves "Christian" or from practicing their religion. For the name BAHAI means a follower of Baha'o'llah just as the word CHRISTIAN means a follower of Christ.

One more matter in which the organization of Bahai's under Shoghi Effendi has departed from the original intent and practice of the Founders, is in their attitude toward money: they have organized the Bahai Cause on a commercial basis. Nothing could be more abhorrent to the true Bahai spirit than this. They themselves described their organization when they applied to the commissioner of Patents for a copyright on the name 'Bahai' as follows:

"National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, a common law corporation, organized and operated under a declaration of trust doing business at . . ."

. . .

**National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of
the United States and Canada."**

(Signed) Horace Holley.

All of this is utterly un-Bahai and anti-religious from every point of view. The members of the Assembly instituted a Bahai Fund, and made subscriptions to this fund an article of faith. In their Bahai catechism entitled "Twenty lessons in Baha'i Administration" there is this question:

"Why are the contributions to the Baha'i Fund the measure of the faith of a believer?"

Shoghi Effendi's position and procedure in instituting this Bahai Fund and in making contributions to it an article of faith, has the same significance as if, after the crucifixion of Christ, a so-called Guardian had arisen and proceeded to commercialize Christ's teachings, and had instituted a Christ Fund. If Peter had been asked to contribute to this Fund he would have replied:

"But I have no money. Christ told me to go forth without purse or script, and spread his teachings."

"Never mind what Christ said," the Guardian replies, "you contribute to this Christ Fund or you are not a believer in Christ, and you will be excommunicated.

"Furthermore don't go out and teach individually, for your efforts will be foredoomed to failure."

The other disciples would be subjected to this same treatment. Yet despite this they would go forth and spread Christ's teachings as he told them to. Shortly after, they would be summoned to court on the complaint

of this supposed Guardian and his organization, who reports to the judge:

"Judge, our organization has trade-marked the name of Christ, and we have incorporated the religion of Christ, and these men who call themselves his disciples have no right to use that name, or to teach without our permission."

To this the judge replies:

"But Peter and Paul and everyone in the world has an equal right to call themselves "Christians" and to teach Christ's Cause. You cannot copyright the name of Christ, nor restrain men from spreading His teachings. Religion is free, and every man has a right to practice his religion and to spread it to others."

And so the Guardian would lose his suit and Christ's teachings would be placed in the public domain.

This is an exact parallel of the attitude of the Baha'i organization to the universal teachings of Baha'o'llah, and in particular of the Assembly's insistence upon a money contribution as being the gauge of a believer's faith.

Chapter VIII

A Modern-day saint.

To come back to the matter of independent Bahai effort and the results which it achieves when carried out in a spirit of sincerity. I myself have tried to follow the teachings in my every-day life and I know that I have been guided and used according to my capacity, just as each one everywhere will be if he prays continually to know the will of God, and reads the signs along the way to find out that will.

This is a different age from that of Saint Peter, and the 'purse and scrip' that we are counseled to leave behind today in spreading the Bahai Cause is a different kind — we must not be attached to worldly possessions. One of these disciples of Baha'o'llah, and of Abdul Baha, who exemplifies changing civilization, but with no change in fervor of devotion, is Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, against whom the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is brought suit. Although she had wealth, social position, and education, she armoured herself with the necessary equipment for discipleship. She uses her wealth, her time and her talent entirely in spreading the Bahai teachings. This includes the publication of the magazine, NEW HISTORY, and also THE CARAVAN, which she, together with her late husband, Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, founded in 1933. Her four-story

house is used as an office building to carry on the work, and these efforts have been crowned with enormous success. In the first twelve years of the publication of THE CARAVAN, from 1933 until January 1945, 480 chapters were established in twenty-four countries, with a membership of 80,000. This in spite of a global war which made correspondence difficult and sometimes impossible. At the present writing, January, 1946, there are 838 Chapters — an increase of 435 Chapters in one year and a total of 100,000 members.*

Each Chapter receives its special charter, with membership pins — a globe flying a green flag with the words, 'The world is everybody's home.' The Chapters work independently on the lines of the 'Nine Bahai Principles,' a compilation of the fundamental Bahai teachings; and through the Pen Friends' Guide, thousands of boys and girls in all parts of the world learn to be friends without reference to race, color or creed. The CHILDREN'S CARAVAN has had such a phenomenal success that the NEW HISTORY magazine has been discontinued, (the last issue was January 1946) and a new and larger periodical entitled THE CARAVAN, to be issued quarterly, has taken its place.

Now let us see by contrast what happened to Shoghi Effendi's administration. During Abdul Baha's lifetime, according to the WORLD'S ALMANAC for 1916, there were 2,884 Bahai's in the United States belonging to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais. But in 1926, after the first five years of Shoghi Effendi's administration, there were only 1,247 — a decrease of more than half. In 1936 the figures were still below those of 1916.

*See THE CARAVAN, January, 1946
132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y.

This shrinkage was due to two reasons. One was that when an alleged will was produced, after the death of Abdul Baha, appointing Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause, evidently those with spiritual insight seceded from the Assemblies, because they could not accept an unwitnessed, and undated document, which contradicted what Abdul Baha had said during his lifetime. A second reason evidently was that when others realized that Shoghi Effendi was substituting inverted principles in place of the teachings of Baha'o'llah, they also seceded.

Again in 1941 and 1942 the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is suffered an enormous loss after their defeat in two lawsuits, and their activities were recounted in that excellent history, *BROKEN SILENCE*.^{*} It is said that more than half of their assemblies had to close through lack of members.

I do not wish to imply that the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is are ogres. Not at all. They are highly conventional, highly respectable, and narrow. In fact they are the counter-part of those whom Christ stigmatised as Pharisees. They lack the sympathetic humanitarianism that is the earmark of a spiritual person. But most of all they lack the faith in what Christ called "The Mysteries," and Abdul Baha calls "The Intuitions of the Holy Spirit." Lacking this attribute, on which depends the success of the other principles of religion, such as universal peace, they reduce religion to an organization. And unwittingly they are trying to convert people to Pharaseeism because they really believe it is the religion itself. As a result in

^{*}By Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, New History Foundation,
132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y.

their hands they have reduced the great universal Bahai Teachings to a mediaeval cult. The religion for which 20,000 believers were martyred — for which Baha'o'llah suffered imprisonment for twenty-five years, and Abdul Baha forty years. Now the type of persecutor has changed. Shoghi Effendi, who purports to be the "Guardian" of the Bahai Religion, is the arch persecutor of the religion itself, and of many of the disciples of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha. In other words, by his inversion of the teachings of the Founders of this religion, and by his persecution of their disciples, such as we witnessed in the lawsuit, he and the Baha'i Assembly have done more damage to the Bahai Cause than did those who were its open and avowed enemies.

Whether the alleged will of Abdul Baha is authentic or spurious, the results of the administration of Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is stand as an historical indictment against them. They no more represent the Bahai Religion than the bigots of the dark ages represented Christianity.

We had the dark ages because the bigots of that era got control of Christ's teachings and tortured all those who did not comply with their interpretation. Shoghi Effendi, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is, cannot in this day resort to physical torture to enforce their will, but they have resorted to mental torture by blackmailing with excommunication all those who do not comply with their inverted teachings.

Despite these distressing conditions that I have felt obliged to record at the cost of much time and money, my life has been strangely happy, successful, and intensely interesting. For there is no romance in life so

glorious as that of being willing to follow a spiritual trail and be true to it whether the work assigned to one is pleasant, or disagreeable and difficult. The things that seem disagreeable and difficult are only apparently so. For the moment we begin to do them in the same spirit as if they were coated with heavenly nectar, we discover that they contain surprising, wonderful and beautiful elements.

Due to the alternating experiences I have had — first a Roman Catholic, then a Protestant, then an agnostic, then a near-Communist, and then a Bahai, I know that the greatest evil that can befall man is the loss of faith in God. When I became a Bahai there was restored to me not only the best in Christianity, but the best in every religion that ever existed. And because Abdul Baha restored to me faith in God I have written this book, hoping that those who read it, even if they have little faith to start with, may realize that this can be increased through prayer.

The universality of the Bahai Religion enabled me to appreciate and enjoy all religions. Today I can still go to a Roman Catholic Church and, despite the prejudices that I once had against it, pray to the Virgin Mary, and find no contradiction between this and my faith. I could likewise pray in Protestant churches, in a Mosque of Islam, or in a Hindu Temple, and I could pray in all the edifices of all the holy places in the world with deep reverence, knowing that they stand as a testimony of man's faith, of his effort to contact the vital Spirit of God. I feel a great kinship with all those who are striving for this contact. We need the unity of all the pro-Gods in the world in order to counteract the influence of the

rising tide of the anti-Gods, and the Bahai Religion is the synchronizer of all religions. Abdul Baha said:

There are prepared souls in every religion. Today God is working in all the churches instructing many souls in celestial brotherhood. These souls are related by invisible and spiritual ties and are being ripened by the Holy Spirit.

Abdul Baha warned that if those calling themselves "Bahai" could not rise to the greatness of the Bahai principles, then other individuals and groups would gradually put the principles into practice, even if they remained unaware from whence their inspiration arose. We see evidences of this all over the world today. There is a quickening of the spirit, and a great attempt is being made toward the unification of humanity.

Also there are some individuals who are already endowed with this consciousness of the new era. Since meeting Abdul Baha I have come in contact with three of these great intuitives — humanitarians who arrived at their destination through widely different channels. One stemmed his influence from the saints of Islam; one stemmed his influence from the saints within Christianity; and the most recent one I have contacted, within the last year, stems his influence from a great Avatar in India. These great intuitives exemplify the point, that those who live in accordance with the fundamental teachings of all religions can attain God consciousness regardless of the religion from which they stem. Those who make this attainment strive for the same goal — the spiritual unification of the race and the unification of man with God.

This is what Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha wish us to

do. They did not come to establish a religion of withdrawal from other religions and to form a separate group, but to awaken in us an appreciation of the truths in all religions — to merge with our fellow men, and to come into that consciousness which Baha'o'llah described eighty years ago:

“The foundation of the Palace of Peace is the consciousness of the oneness of mankind.”

Baha'o'llah also indicated that there are as many paths to God as the number of his creatures. For the Bahai Religion is as wide and as deep as humanity itself and higher than its highest aims.

The magic flute of religion is again being heard in the world. Out of divers cults and reforms and sects people are stepping in tune to this call. Some are stirred to a new awakening, others are made uneasy, others are frightened, and others inspired to great achievements, according to each individual's capacity. Man is on the march and will never find peace until he finds his way back to God, the mystical fount without which he cannot survive. In the words of Abdul Baha:

. . . A new era of divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new race is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating all regions. New ideals are stirring the depths of hearts and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men.

Chapter IX

Excerpts from the Writings of Abdul Baha.

FRIENDSHIP

Now is the time when you must affiliate with all nations with joy and the utmost kindness —. . .

In every dispensation the Command of friendship and the law of Love have been revealed, but it has been circumscribed within the circle of believing friends and not with those outside of it. Praise be to God that in this wonderful cycle the laws of God are not confined by any limitations; neither must they be exercised toward a special community to the exclusion of another. He (Baha'o'llah) hath commanded the friends to show love, friendship, amity and kindness to ALL the people of the world.

Now the believers of God must live in accord with these divine Teachings. They must become kind fathers to the children of humanity; affectionate brothers to the youths of mankind and soul-sacrificing children toward those who are laden with age . . . show love and kindness to all, even to your enemies. . . .

**Abdul Baha in Egypt
by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab**

All mankind must attain to spiritual fraternity,

that is to say, fraternity in the Holy Spirit; for patriotic, racial, and political fraternity are of no avail. Their results are meager but . . . spiritual fraternity is the cause of unity and amity among mankind.*

* * *

If you desire to love God, love thy fellowmen. In them you can see the image and likeness of God. If you are eager to serve God, serve mankind. Renounce the self in the Self of God. When the aerial mariner steers his airship skyward, little by little the inharmony and incongruity of the world of matter are lost, and before his astonished vision he sees widespread the wonderful panorama of God's creation. Likewise when the student of the Path of Reality has attained unto the loftiest summit of Divine Love, he will not look upon the ugliness and misery of mankind; he will not observe any differences; he will not see any racial and patriotic differences; but he will look upon humanity with the glorified vision of a seer and a prophet. Let us all strive that we may attain to this highest pinnacle of ideal and spiritual life.**

REAL FRATERNITY

Creation is the expression of motion. Motion is life. A moving object is a living object whereas that which is motionless and inert is as dead . . . Nothing is stationary in the material world or in the inner world of intellect and consciousness.

Religion is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore it must be living, vitalized, mov-

*Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. 1, page 165.

**Diary notes of Ahmad Sohrab, April 11, 1913.

ing and progressive. If it be without motion and non-porgressive it is without divine life; it is dead . . . All things are subject to re-formation. This is a century of life and renewal . . . Sciences of former ages and philosophies of the past are useless today . . . Old ideas and modes of thought are fast becoming obsolete . . . for this is clearly the century of a new life, the century of the revelation of the reality and therefore the greatest of all centuries . . .

. . . The prophets of God have founded the laws of divine civilization. They have been the root and fundamental source of all knowledge . . . The spiritual bortherhood which is enkindled and established through the breaths of the Holy Spirit unites nations and removes the cause of warfare and strife. It transforms mankind into one great family and establishes the foundation of the oneness of humanity. It promulgates the spirit of international agreement and insures Universal Peace . . . Until all nations and peoples become united by the bonds of the Holy Spirit in this real fraternity, until national and international prejudices are effaced in the reality of this spiritual brotherhood, true progress, prosperity and lasting happiness will not be attained by man. This is the century of new and universal nationhood. Sciences have advanced, industries have progressed, politics have been reformed, liberty has been proclaimed, justice is awakening. This is the century of motion, divine stimulus and accomplishment; the century of human solidarity and altruistic service; the century of Universal Peace and the reality of the divine kingdom.*

*The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. 1, pages 138-9.

THE ILLUMINATI

About six hundred years ago a Society was formed in Persia called the Society of Friends, the members of which gathered together for silent communion with the Almighty.

They divided Divine Philosophy into two parts: That which can be acquired through lectures and study in schools and colleges; and the philosophy of the Illuminati, or Followers of the Inner Light. The schools of this philosophy were held in Silence and meditation, and by turning to the Source of Light. From that Central Light the mysteries of the Kingdom were reflected in their hearts. All the Divine problems were solved by this power of illumination.

Among the great questions unfolding through the rays of Divine Reality upon the mind of man, is the question of the reality of the spirit of man; of the birth of the Spirit; of his birth from this world into the world of God; the question of the inner life of the Spirit, and of the fate of the Spirit after its ascension from the body.

They, likewise, meditate upon the scientific questions of the day, and these also are solved. "Followers of the Inner Light," they attain to a superlative degree of power, and are entirely freed from blind dogmas and imitations. Men rely on their statements. By themselves, within themselves, they solve all mysteries.

If they find a solution by the assistance of the Inner Light, they accept it, and afterwards declare

it; otherwise they would consider it a matter of blind imitation.

They go so far as to reflect upon the essential nature of Divinity, Divine Revelation, and the Manifestation of God in this world. All philosophical, divine, and scientific questions are solved by them through the power of the Spirit.

Baha'o'llah says there is a sign from God in every phenomenon. The sign of the intellect is contemplation, and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at the same time. He cannot both speak and meditate.

It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your Spirit, the Spirit answers, the Light breaks forth, and reality is revealed.

You cannot apply the name of "man" to any being devoid of the faculty of meditation. Without it he would be a mere animal.

Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the Breath of the Holy Spirit. The bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation. Through it, the Spirit of man is informed and strengthened. Through it, affairs of which man knows nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it one receives Divine inspiration. Through it one partakes of Heavenly food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of

mysteries. In that subjective mood, withdrawing himself from all outside objects, man can unfold the secrets of things within himself, because he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life.

Through the power of meditation man frees himself from the animal nature, discerns the reality of things, and is put in touch with God. This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences and arts. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, and colossal undertakings are carried out. Through it governments can be run smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, some thoughts are useless to man. They are like the waves ebbing to and fro in the sea without result.

But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the Inner Light, and characterized with Divine attributes, then the results will be wonderful.

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror. If you put before it earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore, if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects, he will be informed of these. But if the mirror of the Spirit is turned heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in the heart, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be attained.

Let us, therefore, keep this faculty rightly directed, turning it to the Heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects, so that we may discover the secrets of the Kingdom, comprehend the allegories of the

Bible, and the mysteries of the Spirit. May we indeed become mirrors reflecting Heavenly Realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the Constellations of Heaven.

Spoken at a meeting of the Society of Friends,
St. Martin's Lane, London, January 12, 1913.

RADIANT ACQUIESCENCE

Freedom is not a matter of place, it is a condition. I was thankful for the prison, and the lack of liberty was very pleasing to me, for those days were passed in the path of service, under the utmost difficulties and trials, bearing fruits and results.

Unless one accepts dire vicissitudes, he will not attain. To me prison is freedom, troubles rest me, death is life, and to be despised is honor. Therefore I was happy all that time in prison. When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed release, for self is the greater prison. When this release takes place, then one cannot be outwardly imprisoned. When they put my feet in stocks, I would say to the guard, "You cannot imprison me, for here I have light and air and bread and water. There will come a time when my body will be in the ground, and I shall have neither light nor air, nor food nor water, but even then I shall not be imprisoned." The afflictions which come to humanity sometimes tend to center the consciousness upon the limitations, and this is a veritable prison. Release comes by making of the will a door through which the confirmations of the Spirit come.

* * *

The confirmations of the Spirit are all those

powers and gifts with which some are born (and which men sometimes call genius) but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his or her life with radiant acquiescence.*

The human will must be subdued and trained into the Will of God. It is a great power to have a strong will, but a greater power to give that will to God.

* * *

Sacrifice your will to the Will of God. The Kingdom is attained by the one who forgets self. Everything becomes yours by the renunciation of everything.

* * *

. . . Whosoever is occupied with himself is wandering in the desert of heedlessness and regret! The master key to self-mastery is self-forgetfulness. The road to the palace of life is through the path of renunciation.

GARDENERS OF HUMAN TREES

Thus there have been many holy Manifestations of God. One thousand years ago, two hundred thousand years ago, one million years ago the bounty of God was flowing, the radiance of God was shining, the dominion of God was existing.

. . . These holy Manifestations of God are the educators and trainers of the world of existence, the teachers of the world of humanity. They liberate

*From ABDUL BAHÁ on DIVINE PHILOSOPHY.
Compiled by Isabel Fraser Chamberlain.

man from the darkness of the world of nature, deliver him from despair, error, ignorance, imperfections and all evil qualities . . .

. . . Were it not for the coming of these holy Manifestations of God all mankind would be found on the plane of the animal. They would remain darkened and ignorant like those who have been denied schooling and who never had a teacher or trainer . . .

. . . The holy Manifestations are the ideal gardeners of human souls, the divine cultivators of human hearts. The world of existence is but a jungle of disorder and confusion, a state of nature producing nothing but fruitless, useless trees. The ideal gardeners train these wild uncultivated human trees, cause them to become fruitful, water and cultivate them day by day so that they adorn the world of existence and continue to flourish in the utmost beauty.

Although the stars are scintillating and brilliant, the sun is superior to them in luminous effulgence. Similarly these holy divine Manifestations are and must always be distinguished above all other beings in every attribute of glory and perfection, in order that it may be proven that the Manifestation is the true teacher and real trainer; that he is the Sun of Truth endowed with a supreme splendor and reflecting the beauty of God. Otherwise it is not possible for us to train one human individual and then after training him, believe in him and accept him as the holy manifestation of divinity. The real Manifestation of God must be endowed with divine knowledge

and not dependent upon learning acquired in schools. He must be the educator, not the educated; his standard intuition instead of tuition. He must be perfect and not imperfect, great and glorious instead of being weak and impotent. He must be wealthy in the riches of the spiritual world and not indigent. In a word, the holy divine Manifestation of God must be distinguished above all others of mankind in every aspect and qualification, in order that he may be able to effectively train the human body-politic, eliminate the darkness enshrouding the human world, uplift humanity from a lower to a higher kingdom, be able through the penetrative power of his Word to promote and spread broadcast the beneficent message of Universal Peace among men, bring about the unification of mankind in religious belief through a manifest divine power, harmonize all sects and denominations and convert all nativities and nationalities into one nativity and fatherland.*

DREAMS

When thou desirest and yearnest for meeting in the world of vision; . . . turn toward the court of the Peerless One, offer prayer to Him and lay thy head upon the pillow. When sleep cometh, the doors of revelation shall be opened and all thy desires shall become revealed.*

As to truthful dreams: I beg of God that thy inner eye (insight) may be opened that thou mayest thyself differentiate between truthful and untruthful dreams.**

*The Promulgation of Universal Peace. Vol. 1, pp. 458-464.

**Tablets, Vol. 1, page 196.

. . . Prayer is a key by which the doors of the kingdom are opened. There are many subjects which are difficult for man to solve. But during prayer and supplication they are unveiled and there is nothing that man cannot find out.

Remember not your own limitations. The help of God will come to you. Forget yourself. God's help will surely come.

When you call on the mercy of God waiting to reinforce you, your strength will be tenfold.* * *

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

. . . Those who have ascended have different attributes from those who are on earth, yet there is no real separation.

In prayer there is a mingling of station, a mingling of condition. Pray for them as they pray for you! When you do not know it, and are in a receptive attitude, they are able to make suggestions to you, if you are in difficulty. This sometimes happens in sleep. But there is no phenomenal intercourse! That which seems like phenomenal intercourse has another explanation . . . The spirit of those that have passed on are freed from sense-life, and do not use physical means . . .*

Followers of the prophets have also this power of praying for the forgiveness of souls; therefore we may not think that any soul is condemned to a sta-

* * * London Talks, page 27.

* Tablets of Abdul Baha. Vol. 1, page 104.

tionary condition of suffering or loss, arising from their absolute ignorance of God. The power of effective intercession for them always exists. All the people in the other world, are they not the creatures of God? Therefore they can progress in the other world. As they can receive light from supplication here, there, they can also receive light from supplication. The rich in the other world can help the poor, as the rich can help the poor here. In every world all are the creatures of God. They are always dependent upon Him, not independent, nor can they ever be so. While they are needful of God, the more they supplicate, the richer they become. What is their merchandise? What is their wealth? In the other world what is the means of help and assistance? It is intercession. First undeveloped souls must gain progress through the supplications of the spiritually rich; afterwards, they can progress through their own supplications.* *

FAITH, PRAYER AND HEALING

There are three kinds of Faith: first . . . a child is born of Mohammedan parents, he is a Mohammedan. This faith is weak traditional faith: secondly that which comes from knowledge, and is the faith of understanding. This is good, but there is a better, the faith of practice — this is real faith.

• • •

There is but one power which heals — that is God. The state or condition through which the healing takes place is the confidence of the heart. By

* "Abdul Baha in London."

** From magazine "Star of the West" March 2, 1919.

some this state is reached through pills, powders, and physicians. By others through hygiene, fasting, and prayer. By others through direct perception.

* * *

All that we see around us is the work of mind. It is mind in the herb and in the mineral that acts on the human body, and changes its condition.

Disease is of two kinds: material and spiritual. Take for instance, a cut hand; if you pray for the cut to be healed and do not stop its bleeding, you will not do much good; a material remedy is needed.

Sometimes if the nervous system is paralyzed through fear, a spiritual remedy is necessary. Madness, incurable otherwise, can be cured through prayer. It often happens that sorrow makes one ill, this can be cured by spiritual means.

There is nothing sweeter in the world of existence than prayer.

Man must live in a state of prayer. The most blessed condition is the condition of prayer and supplication. Prayer is conversation with God. The greatest attainment, or the sweetest state is none other than conversation with God. It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom, and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence. The highest attribute given Moses is the following verse: "God carried along a conversation with Moses."

What is prayer? It is conversation with God. While man prays he sees himself in the presence of

God. If he concentrates his attention he will surely at the time of prayer realize that he is conversing with God. Often at night I do not sleep and the thoughts of this world weigh heavily on my mind. I toss uneasily on my bed. Then in the darkness of the night I get up and pray — converse with God. It is most sweet and uplifting.

Prayer and supplication are so effective that they inspire one's heart for the whole day with high ideals and supreme sanctity and calmness. One's heart must be sensitive to the music of prayer. He must feel the effect of prayer. He must not be like an organ from which softest notes stream forth without having consciousness of sensation in itself.

PRAYER AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

A friend asked: "How should one look forward to death?"

Abdul Baha answered: "How does one look forward to the goal of any journey? With hope and with expectation. It is even so with the end of this earthly journey. In the next world, man will find himself freed from many of the disabilities under which he now suffers. Those who have passed on through death, have a sphere of their own. It is not removed from ours; their work, the work of the Kingdom, is ours; but it is sanctified from what we call 'time and space.' Time with us is measured by the sun. When there is no more sunrise, and no more sunset, that kind of time does not exist for man. Those who have ascended have different attri-

butes from those who are still on earth, yet there is not real separation.

In prayer there is a mingling of station, a mingling of condition. Pray for them as they pray for you! When you do not know it, and are in a receptive attitude, they are able to make suggestions to you, if you are in difficulty. This sometimes happens in sleep. But there is no phenomenal intercourse! That which seems like phenomenal intercourse has another explanation.

. . . The spirit of those who have passed on are freed from sense-life, and do not use physical means. It is not possible to put these great matters into human words; the language of man is the language of children, and man's explanation often leads astray."

Someone present asked how it was that in prayer and meditation the heart often turns with instinctive appeal to some friend who has passed into the next life.

Abdul Baha answered: "It is a law of God's creation that the weak should lean upon the strong. Those to whom you turn may be the mediators of God's Power to you, even as when on earth. But it is the One Holy Spirit that strengthens all men." Hereupon another friend referred to the communing of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah; and Abdul Baha said: "The faithful are ever sustained by the Supreme Concourse. In the Supreme Concourse are Jesus, and Moses, and Elijah, and Baha'Ullah, and other Supreme Souls: there, also, are the martyrs."

—Abdul Baha in London.

The following five talks were given by Abdul Baha while my husband and I were his guests during seventeen out of the last nineteen days of his life on earth:

November 21, 1921

At the evening meal Abdul Baha said:

. . . .

When man enters the Kingdom then all good qualities will become apparent in him. The natural characteristics which are destructive will be banished, and the Divine characteristics will take their place, just like the iron that is put in the fire. The natural characteristics of the iron are hardness, coldness, and blackness. But in the fire these are transformed. The blackness turns to red, the coldness to heat, the hardness to liquidity and softness. All its natural characteristics are transmuted, and it takes on the conditions of the fire.

Likewise when man enters the Kingdom the characteristics of the world of nature are transmuted. In some animals there is great cruelty, in others great greed and ferociousness; these are the necessities of the world of nature. In man these characteristics are also seen, but when he enters the Kingdom his selfish animalistic characteristics change. That is why we say man is reborn, for he has attained to a new life, he has become freed from the characteristics of the world of nature and attained to the life of the Kingdom.

When man is ill he is not good tempered — he becomes irritable and morose, but when he attains health he becomes more kindly and is happy. Like-

wise man's characteristics change completely when he is endowed with the health of the Kingdom.

November 22, 1921

This is what Abdul Baha said at luncheon:

It is necessary for man to eat otherwise he becomes feeble. He cannot say that the food he ate yesterday suffices for today.

God's bounty is unending. Every day he bestows a new bounty. For example, yesterday the sun gave out light, heat, and energy, and today it has repeated that bounty. It does not say, 'Yesterday's rays and heat are sufficient.'

Every day should have its new nourishment, for all things are constantly renewed — thoughts policies science medicine, and the arts. Then is it possible that the bounty of God should not be renewed?

In ancient times old thoughts sufficed. People felt there was no need of new methods. But material civilization has advanced a thousandfold. How foolish it would be if man were to say that the old civilization suffices. The same is true regarding the Divine Civilization. This has also been renewed. Today it is not possible to put some of the commandments of the earlier prophets into practice, for people have progressed to a higher state of civilization. For instance, in the time of Moses, a man's hand was cut off for a comparatively slight theft. Today if a man stole a million dollars this law would not be enforced.

As long as the sun exists we shall have the boun-

ties of light, heat, and energy, which are the manifestations of the sun. And as long as God exists we shall have His bounties, graces, and activities, renewed through His Manifestations. As long as God is King, He will have soldiers, riches, empires, because this is the basis of His Kingdom. We cannot say that God created an empire and left it.

November 23, 1921.

At luncheon Abdul Baha said:

No matter how much one helps a brother it is animated largely by a sense of duty. But regarding a spiritual brother it is not the same. Any help that might be given is animated by the spirit and is never forgotten, for it is not done for the sake of duty.

The important relationship is the spiritual kinship. This is composed of the heart and soul, while the material relationship is of water and clay. It often happens that the ordinary brother becomes an enemy, but with the spiritual brother this is an impossibility.

When they brought Christ's mother to him someone said: 'Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee.' But he answered and said unto him that told him, 'Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? . . . For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother.'

How many times has it happened that a gardener cuts off a weak branch from a tree and grafts

a strong one in its place. The weak branch is fit only for the fire.

November 24, 1921

Tonight we were again blessed with the presence of Abdul Baha — his last supper with us. He said:

Man has two aspects, the spiritual and the physical. His body is made of clay but his spirit is from the Divine. His body is the shell, and his mind the pearl within the shell. The shell is not so important, but the pearls are very precious. This is the case with man. But the Manifestations of God have other Powers and these Powers are supernatural. They are the Powers which produce such marvelous effects in the world — through which events are foretold thousands of years in advance.

Then he arose from the table and, after washing his hands in the customary oriental fashion, stood in the doorway looking so thoughtfully and for so long a time toward his prison home across the Bay of Acca, that it seemed a portent of something about to happen. Suddenly he turned and bade us goodnight. With one accord we followed him down the steps and watched him as he went up the road, preceded by his tiny grandchild who always lighted her grandfather on his way although she could hardly toddle with the weight of the lantern.

The next afternoon Abdul Baha sent for Lawrence and me and told us we were to depart on the train that left that night. That same evening he said to us:

I shall always be with you, always. Try to remember this — that the physical presence is nothing — that the real union is the spiritual union. In

the days of Baha'o'llah many people believed in him who had never seen him, and there were others who lived close to him all the days of their lives, yet were very far from him.

These last talks of Abdul Baha are especially significant considering what happened later as recounted in this book. He repeated what he had so often said — that the spiritual relationship, and not the physical, is all important. He also repeated what the Founders of every religion have taught, the overwhelming importance of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit — that it works as potently through them, after they pass from this earth, as it did while they walked among us in the flesh. The following is what he said on this subject:

“ . . . the meaning of Christ's resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signified his teachings, his bounties, his perfections, and his spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after his martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost; for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting his counsels into practice, and arising to serve him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and his bounty appeared; his religion found life, his teachings and his admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body,

until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.”

Some Answered Questions; pages 120, 121.

Also he promised this to those who would rise up in the Cause of God regardless of what their religion might be:

I say unto you that anyone who will rise up in the Cause of God at this time shall be filled with the Spirit of God, and that He will send His Hosts from heaven to help you, and that nothing shall be impossible to you if you have faith. And now I give you a commandment which shall be for a Covenant between you and me: that ye have faith; that your faith be steadfast as a rock that no storms can move; that nothing can disturb, and that it endure through all things even to the end; . . . for I am with you always, whether living or dead; I am with you to the end. As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be . . .

As this book goes to press an article in a newspaper* about General Patton exemplifies the point that I have tried to bring out in these pages — the power of prayer if it is backed up by right action and sacrifice. General Patton was a deeply religious man despite the fact that he used much profanity. He believed he shortened the war in Europe, according to the account given by Col. James H. O’Neil, by distributing a prayer to every man under his command that God would stop the rains.

Part of this article is as follows:

“It was December 13, 1944, three days before

*Magazine section of Los Angeles Examiner, March 31, 1946.

Von Rundstedt's army made its disastrous breakthrough into Luxembourg and Belgium. The rains which preceded and cloaked preparations for the Nazi thrust worried Patton. He sent for O'Neil.

. . . .

"Something," he said, "must be done about these rains. Padre, you've got to pray as you've never prayed before. I want the men to pray, too, to stop the rains . . . commanders can do much, but in every contest there is that margin, in battles as in life, that might be called the breaks. That does not come from men: it comes from God. It is a tide in the events of men and in battle. A tide that makes the decision. I want a prayer written to stop these rains."

The prayer was written by Col. O'Neil and on December 19, it was distributed in the form of Christmas cards to 250,000 men. The following day the rains stopped, the sun shone, the Germans came out in the open, where General Patton wanted them, and the battle was won.

Today there is a greater battle being waged than that of the world war — the battle between the anti-God totalitarians, and the pro-God democracies. This battle can be won by the pro-Gods for the freedom of mankind, if we become pro-Gods in reality, if we apply our religion. Then our prayers will be effective, regardless of our religious affiliations. Then shall we be able to win the battle against the anti-Gods — be able to offset the destructive forces of materialism, and circumvent the possible destruction of our planet through mis-use of atomic power.

THE END

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